

## Circle of Waste Rug

a community project by Upcycle Newcastle



### What are we making?

[Upcycle Newcastle](#) (a project of [Transition Newcastle](#)) is helping create a community made rag rug (hopefully getting to 6m in diameter) from old t-shirts, clothing and linen. We will be taking the rug to different venues in the Hunter region to work on it with people over the coming months.



### Why make it?

Upcycle Newcastle aims to demonstrate ways of taking responsibility for our own waste. We also work to show creative ways of making the stuff we want, from stuff we already have.

The clothing and textile industry uses vast amounts of the world's resources – water, energy and land - and creates huge amounts of pollution and waste. One t-shirt and pair of jeans are estimated to use 20,000L of water through their production and use. The cotton industry alone uses 25% of the world's pesticides and herbicides. Fast fashion has created a system of unsustainable consumption of clothing and textiles that has huge environmental impacts.

Our Circle of Waste rug is a demonstration of a creative and collaborative way of re-using damaged, old and discarded textile items rather than sending these items to landfill. It allows us to have discussions with people about waste and consumption in a non-threatening context, and is also an engaging community building project.

### Our inspiration

Fritz Haeg led a team of people in the US in 2013 to create the Domestic Integrities A05 rug. It grew to 27 feet (8m) in diameter. This rug was constructed in donut sections (as ours will be) for ease of transporting. They used a finger crochet method.



## How are we making it?

We plan to engage many people in the Hunter region in making this rug – we hope it will truly be a community made piece. We have already received lots of donations of materials and over 150 people have contributed to its construction so far. People will be able to cut and prepare the materials as well as construct the rug with us.

We are using the Amish Knot or ‘toothbrush rug’ technique which is a blanket stitch using old toothbrushes upcycled into large needles. This is a traditional Amish technique of creating a rag rug.

The centre section is now complete, at 2.8m in diameter, and we have commenced the second section to be a donut ring to fit around the inner section. Constructing the rug in this way will make it manageable to carry and transport.

## What will happen to it when it's finished?

At this stage we're not sure! As the rug grows and more people get to see it, we are planning on asking for expressions of interest from groups or organisations who would like to host the rug short or long term. If you know of an organisation, group or venue that would be interested in hosting the rug for a while, please contact us

As we are using this project to promote upcycling as a practical, creative way of managing some of our waste, we would love to bring the rug to your venue or group to enable people to contribute to the making of it. We aim to have at least 3 members of Upcycle Newcastle available to teach and work with people, and would need space to have the rug (currently about 3.1m in diameter) on the floor or on a group of tables, as well as a table for cutting old t-shirts into the rug yarn.

If you are interested in being part of this project, please contact Cathy by email – [upcycling@transitionnewcastle.org.au](mailto:upcycling@transitionnewcastle.org.au) or by phone on 0411 434 013.



upcycle newcastle

a project of Transition Newcastle