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Will Plaster is an inspirational Tassie Good Sort. He has a keen eye for reusable items and a strong motivation to reduce waste across the University of Tasmania campuses.

Will and his team installed their first Recycling Wall in a central location at the Sandy Bay campus at the end of 2019 because the University wanted to provide staff and students with the option to deposit 'difficult-to-recycle' items which could not be placed in co-mingled recycling bins.

The first Wall was made from a unit inherited from the City of Hobart and there are now around 25 Recycling Walls throughout the UTAS campuses, the latest ones cleverly created out of second-hand furniture from the University's Re-use Program.

Will initially adapted an ikea-style storage cube bookcase for a Recycling Wall but then started experimenting with filing cabinets. He discovered that the filing cabinet was in many ways perfect for collections as they are sturdy, have purpose-built drawers in various 2- 3- and 4-drawer combinations, and there was a definite surplus of cabinets within the University as the trend continued from paper to digital storage. Graphics are applied to the drawers, top and sides to attract attention and provide advice on what is accepted for recycling. The finished Walls are placed in high-traffic areas in campus buildings across Tasmania.

Batteries, printer cartridges, small e-waste items and mobile phones are just some of the recycling streams which are collected on the campuses and then forwarded onto a mixture of local and mainland-based recyclers.

To date, the Recycling Walls have collected over 525kg of recyclable materials. Will weighs the recycling to gauge which streams are the most used and to adjust the Recycling Wall configurations as required.

Local resource recovery centres and mainland-based recyclers Terracycle and Close the Loop receive the recyclable items collected by the university. By June 2021, UTAS had recycled over 1100 pens, over 2000 toothbrushes and paste tubes, nearly 20,000 bread tags, over 2000 contact lens blister packs and cases, as well as 227 printer toner cartridges. Impressive!

Will's top tips for others wanting to set up a local Recycling Wall:

- Plan how you'll collect items from the Wall and pack them for storage and transport.  
*"I end up with boxes or bags of items which are quite small and it's no fun when you drop a 2kg box of bread tags on the ground and have to pick all of them up! An unexpected pleasure however is packaging the items up and forwarding onto the mainland recyclers – it's really, really satisfying."*
- Make sure you have adequate space for the collection point and for temporary storage once collected.  
*"Rather than send small amounts of recycling onto the recyclers, we tend to accumulate minimum quantities before forwarding on. It's just more efficient this way."*
- Be prepared to sort what is collected and have a space to do this.  
*"Not everyone will place the correct items in the correct drawer... so having somewhere I can do this away from the Recycling Walls (which are normally in thoroughfares) has been invaluable."*

The future is looking bright for Will's Recycling Wall project too, with plans to upgrade the graphics used on the filing cabinets to a more uniform and professional design and consolidating the recycling streams to more University-generated waste types, rather than waste generated from home and brought onto campus for recycling.

The Recycling Walls serve to teach staff and students about the University's commitment towards a zero-waste society, as well as a real-world example of a circular economy. And with Will's passion and persistence, the Walls have made a big, positive difference to the amount of waste destined for Tasmanian landfills.

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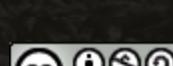


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