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## do-it-yourself

# Repairing the broken skills

**Laura Trieste**

THE technical difficulties that leave most of us dumbfounded are no match for the staff at The Bower Reuse and Repair Centre.

The Marrickville environmental charity's technicians take great pleasure in giving new life to even the most obscure and complex household items that come their way.

They have made it their mission to pass their skills on to the community since opening Australia's first Repair Cafe in 2014.

"People can bring in what is dear to them and get help with fixing it," The Bower's

### Reaching out



» The Bower is holding a crowd-funding campaign to give furniture items to asylum seekers

» The From House to Home project aims to raise \$10,000 by June 10

» Details: [startsomegood.com/fromhousetohome](http://startsomegood.com/fromhousetohome)

general manager Guido Verbist says.

The first Repair Cafe was opened in Amsterdam in 2009 and has become a growing global trend.

"It's not a free service, it's free advice. You are



The Bower's Guido Verbist, Richard Myers and Stuart Griggs at the repair cafe. Picture: Craig Wilson

expected to engage in it yourself," Verbist says.

"It's more than just repairing, it's educating people about what kind of items are repairable."

Their weekly Wednesday afternoon Repair Cafe has been so popular that this year The Bower are taking it on the road, working with local councils to engage the wider Sydney community.

Verbist says they have an 83 per cent success rate in fixing the items which people bring in.

"About 75 per cent of it is electronic items and the remaining is bikes and furniture," he says.

Learning the basic skills that help you recognise where a problem is in an item and what can be done to fix it is the best defence

against the throwaway society, Verbist says.

"Items these days are made very cheap and are not built for repair," he says.

"If you don't find screws or it's welded, you usually know it only has one life.

"The older antique items are easier to repair than the newer versions."

**More information at** [bower.org.au](http://bower.org.au)