



Textile R Newsletter Spring 2025



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Textile R Spring 2025

Welcome to the Spring 2025 Textile R Newsletter

It's been a busy and inspiring few months for the **TextileR group**, full of collaboration and creative momentum.

A highlight was hosting internationally renowned Fashion Sustainability expert, **Kate Fletcher** for a public talk and workshop in September. Kate, a pioneer in Fashion Sustainability shared her frank and fearless insights on 'where to now' for sustainability in a panel discussion with Meriel Chamberlain, who is currently heading up **Project Boomerang** project for Salvos here in Brisbane.

We celebrated **three** PhD completions, an inspiring Honours project, and the launch of [Make a Scene](#) by PhD student Chris Salter at the Queensland Museum.

Brisbane's independent fashion scene was well represented at **Brisbane Fashion Month** in October. Panelists included **Kiara Bulley** (Bulley Bulley), **Kat Walsh** (Practice Studio), **Dr Sal Edwards**, **Dr Anna Hickey** (The Stitchery Collective), photographer **James Caswell**, and **First Nations model Elaine George**. Together, their voices

highlighted the depth of Brisbane's creative fashion talent — and its strong commitment to community and connection.

Across Europe, **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** schemes and new **ecodesign regulations** aim to make producers accountable for textile waste. Yet recyclers' warehouses remain full of low-quality, non-recyclable garments — a symptom of fast fashion's global excess. As **polyester use** surges and **Shein** opens stores in Paris, the limits of large-scale solutions are clear.

Our colleagues in **Sri Lanka**, provide us with another powerful vision for global fashion with their international research project and exhibition, [Threaded Together](#), and here in Queensland, initiatives like **The Nest** and **TextileR's community research** point to another way forward — one rooted in repair, creativity, and care.

Tiziana Ferrero-Regis and Kath Horton.



In Conversation, with Kate Fletcher and Meriel Chamberlin

16 September 2025

The panel *In Conversation with Kate Fletcher and Meriel Chamberlin* brought together leading voices in sustainable fashion to discuss the urgent shift required in the industry. Coming from two different but converging voices in the fashion industry, they discussed the current state of the industry and its future in an era of **climate and social crises**. Fletcher is known for her foundational work on sustainability and challenged conventional narratives of sustainability and growth, asking the audience to re-imagine **fashion and fashion systems rooted within planetary boundaries, sufficiency**



and wellbeing. Fletcher also spoke about cultivation of care, locality and interdependence within education and the local industry.

Meriel Chamberlin shared her passion for rebuilding Australia's textile industry. Founder of **Full Circle Fibres** and now **General Manager of Project Boomerang** with the Salvos, she is leading work to divert textile waste from landfill through automated sorting and community-based redesign. Meriel also presented **Mud to Marle**, a project that blends premium cotton with low-value wool to create viable local textiles for fashion manufacturing. Together, the speakers mapped a future for fashion grounded in **circularity, material integrity, and an ethics of care** — showing that change depends not on a single solution, but on many interconnected actions, from design to mending to technical innovation

The event was attended by 90 guests who extended the conversation showing a growing interest in rethinking about fashion as a collective practice.

Tiziana Ferrero-Regis

The Dressed Body in the Living World: A Workshop with Kate Fletcher

Following the event on the 16th, on the 17th of September, Kate Fletcher delivered a workshop at QUT focused on the body and its intersection with materials, systems and design. 30 participants were asked to literally ground their body within nature, and reflect while observing their environment. Using ourselves as sites of enquiry, we returned to the workshop with stories to tell about our dressed body within the environment, reflecting on the ecological system that interacts us and our dress.



Tiziana Ferrero-Regis

Ethical Clothing Australia Panel

Tiziana Ferrero-Regis at the ECA Panel



Between 8 and 14 October, **Ethical Clothing Australia (ECA)** marked 25 years of protecting workers in the Textile, Clothing and Footwear industry with events across Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia.

In Brisbane, the **Made in Queensland** panel was chaired by **ECA National Manager Reilly**, bringing together **Michael Rasmussen** (Struddys), **Jenny Kruschel** (TCF National Secretary, AMWU), **Raas Wallis-King** (ForestWorks), and **A/Prof**

Tiziana Ferrero-Regis (QUT) to discuss the strengths and future of Queensland's TCF industry. The conversation highlighted the potential of the **2032 Brisbane Olympics and Paralympics** as a catalyst for local industry growth, grounded in **skills mapping, partnerships, circularity, and ethical standards**.

With an aging workforce, panellists emphasised the importance of **intergenerational skill development** and the vital contributions of **migrants and refugees**, including those from asylum-seeking backgrounds, to the future of Australia's TCF sector.

Inspiring Change: Clothes Minded at the HEIA(Q) Conference

Clothes Minded proudly presented *Wear the Future* at the recent **Home Economics Institute of Australia (Qld) Conference**, joining passionate educators and innovators working toward a more sustainable future through education.

Our exhibition stand became a lively hub of conversation as visitors shared answers to one key question: *"What's one thing you can do to inspire your students to think differently about sustainable fashion?"* By the end of the event, the pinboard was bursting with ideas — a vivid reminder that small



actions, collectively, can drive powerful change.

The enthusiasm we encountered reaffirmed our belief that teachers are central to transforming fashion education. Online resources for educators will launch soon — visit clothesminded.com.au or follow @clothesminded_au to stay connected and help inspire the next generation to *wear the future — and shape it too*.

Follow Clothes Minded on Instagram!

Congratulations to our Doctoral Candidates!

2025 has been a prolific and inspiring year for Fashion's doctoral students.

Dr Paola Di Trocchio graduated in August with her project *Self-Fashioning as Rapid Curation: A Case Study through Anna Piaggi*. **Dr Ehud Joseph** will graduate in December with *Exploring Queer Co-Design: How Queer Individuals Negotiate Communal Performative Identity through Costume-Making*, and **Dr Luis Quijano** with *Sustainable Fashion through Bacterial Cellulose: Bridging Disciplines, Rethinking Materials*.

We asked Dr Di Trocchio, Dr Joseph, and Dr Quijano to share how they navigated their doctoral journeys — and what completing a PhD in fashion means to them.

Dr Di Trocchio: "The PhD had been an ambition of mine from when I started uni at 17 and looked up to and admired my Monash university professors for their intelligence in all things writing, research, speaking, history, arts and fashion. It seemed like the perfect career for me. It was also something my parents treasured and thought would suit me. By the time I graduated in my 40s, life had changed. It's true when they say, Life is what happens when you are making other plans. But when I looked down at my hand holding the degree, bearing a wedding ring, and about

to walk on stage, knowing that my husband, son, parents and sister were in the crowd, I felt incredibly proud and pleased that I had persevered".

Supervision: Tiziana Ferrero-Regis; Dr Courtney Pedersen.

Dr Ehud Joseph feels that "when I embarked in my PhD my main motivation was to improve my employability. What I did not expect was the amazing privilege of working with clever, supportive, and inspiring supervisors, which the process involved. Looking back, the PhD has become the greatest gift I have given myself, the opportunity to explore my passions within a supportive environment, enhance my academic skills, and fundamentally change my perception of myself as a practitioner, as well as what I want to do with my life moving forward. My upcoming graduation will be a lovely way to celebrate the journey. Still, the impact of the PhD has already transformed what I do at work and, more importantly, the personal projects already in progress and development".

Supervision: Dr Tiziana Ferrero-Regis, Dr Jeremy Kerr; Dr Madeline Taylor.

Dr Luis Quijano said "As a first-generation and international PhD graduate from QUT, finishing my PhD felt less like an ending and more like the beginning of a new chapter in my life. Now it's up to me to keep pushing forward with the skills and confidence I have gained from my PhD, in the evolving world of design, science, and emerging materials that I continue to explore through my research!".

Supervision: Dr Tiziana Ferrero-Regis; Prof Dmitri Golberg. External: Dr Laura Navone (Adjunct, QUT); Prof Alice Payne (Adjunct QUT); Dr Robert Speight (CSIRO).

Works by Mark Wilson (Hairy Dog) in Make a Scene



Make a Scene: Fashioning Queer Identity and Club Culture in 90s Brisbane

TextileR member and PhD candidate **Chris Salter** (Head, Cultures & Histories) has opened *Make a Scene* at Queensland Museum, Kurilpa — marking 35 years since the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Queensland. The exhibition brings long-overlooked queer histories into

view, celebrating the 1990s club scene where fashion became a form of resistance and self-determination. Featuring works by **Hairy Dog**, **Glamourpussy**, and new commissions from **Bulley Bulley** and **Pig Suit**, it honours the creativity that helped shape Brisbane's queer community.

For TextileR, *Make a Scene* speaks to **justice through fashion** — reminding us that sustainability also means sustaining culture, visibility, and belonging.

Shilolyida: Preserving the Past, Recasting the Present

In October, Lydia Pearson and Shilo Engelbrecht unveiled their new **Shilolyida** collection — a quiet celebration of craft, memory, and renewal. Made entirely from deadstock fabrics and heirloom textiles — including domestic tablecloths and napkins — each piece transforms remnants of everyday life into gentle, contemporary garments. The launch featured a lace-tatting demonstration by Catalina, underscoring the collection's devotion to handwork and continuity.

Shilolyida's practice is local, small-scale, and deeply attentive to the histories embedded in cloth.

It reminds us that sustainability could also be about tenderness — how we handle what's left behind.



New Insights into Young Adults Willingness to use Textile Recycling Services



QUT Psychology Honours student Jack Dent, under the supervision of Textile R members Dr Madeline Taylor and Professor Katherine White, has recently completed a project investigating factors that predict the willingness of young adult Australians to use textile recycling services to dispose of their unwearable clothing. This study used a decision making model called the Prototype Willingness Model (PWM). The PWM includes several factors to predict willingness: attitudes, subjective norms (i.e., social pressure), and perceived similarity and favourability toward the "prototypical" textile recycling service user. The project held focus groups and interviews with 13 young Australian adults to identify further key factors of influence which were found to be moral norms (i.e., personal obligation) and trust in textile recycling services, and then a survey of a further 161 participants to generalize findings.

The research found that four factors correlated with willingness: holding positive attitudes about textile recycling, perceiving that others expect them to recycle textiles, and feeling a personal moral duty to do so. The most important factor was similarity to the perceived "typical" user - young adults characterised this person as eco-conscious, young,

and fashion-focused. Surprisingly, young adults' favourability towards the "typical" service user, and their trust in textile recycling services did not influence their willingness. These findings can be used to shape messaging and promotion of such services as **Seamless**, Australia's clothing product stewardship scheme develops.

Textile Circularity in Action - The Nest Community

As Chair of **The Nest Community**, I'm thrilled to share that our team won **two awards** at the 2025 Moreton Bay Business & Innovation Awards — for *Not-for-Profit Excellence* and *Environment & Sustainability Excellence*.

These awards recognise the work of hundreds of women who've contributed more than **260,000 volunteer hours**, processing **726,000 litres of donations** and diverting **over 213,000 metres of fabric** from landfill.

It's a joyful reminder that community-led textile circularity is thriving in South-East Queensland — grounded in care, craft, and collective action.

Congratulations to our CEO **Roz Holt**, our volunteers, and everyone who's helped make The Nest a place where creativity and sustainability truly come together.

Kath Horton



Zoe Mellick Presenting at the Research Showcase



Women in Research Showcase

At the **Women in Research Showcase** on 8 October 2025, **Dr Zoe Mellick** shared her work on how sustainability can be embedded across the fashion system — from fibre and fabric production to garment use, repair and reuse. The showcase celebrated the impact of women leading transformative research across disciplines at QUT, highlighting how their work is shaping more equitable and sustainable futures.

Congratulations Zoe!

[Link to the full Research Showcase 2025](#)

Good Neighbours: A QUT Short Documentary

A new short documentary from the QUT reveals what really happens to Australia's donated clothing once it leaves our shores and the impact it has on our Pacific neighbours. *Good Neighbours* is an **11-minute film** led by **Associate Professor Tiziana Ferrero-Regis** and **Dr Zoe Mellick**, and directed by **award-winning filmmaker Associate Professor Phoebe Hart**, and follows the secondhand clothing trail from Australia to Honiara in the



Solomon Islands. The film uncovers how tonnes of used garments arrive in the Solomons each month, placing pressure on local waste systems while also sustaining small businesses run largely by women who rely on secondhand trade to support their families. Although Australia exports just 2.57% of its used clothing to the Solomon Islands, the country receives up to 300 bales a month - and 88% of its imported clothing originates from Australia. Through a mix of trade data, interviews and on-the-ground footage, *Good Neighbours* highlights the environmental realities of fashion waste and the resilience of the communities navigating its consequences.

The project is supported by the QUT Faculty of Creative Industries, Education and Social Justice, the QUT Centre for Justice, and the QUT Centre for Environment and Society. Screenings are available on request.

Around the World

Threaded Heritage: Internationalizing Sri Lankan Handloom Artistry

TextileR Members Dr. Sumith Gopura and Dr. Ayesha Wickramasinghe (University of Moratuwa), together with their

international partners, Dr. Chaminda Hewage (Cardiff Metropolitan University) and Dr. Tharindu Liyanagunawardena (University of Reading), successfully hosted two international fashion exhibitions in the UK, under the British Council-funded project "***Empowering Handloom Artistry: A Digital Approach to Globalize the Heritage Handloom Industry in Sri Lanka***". The research was supported by two research assistants, Kavindu Dharmakeerthi and Senal Dharmasiri.

The exhibition, [***Threaded Heritage***](#), took place at Cardiff Metropolitan University (16–19 September 2025), attracting strong engagement from academics, students, and the public. It featured six fashion outfits crafted with handloom textiles sourced from 15 weaving centres across five Sri Lankan provinces. Each garment blended fabrics from multiple regions, symbolizing unity through craftsmanship. Digital profiles of artisans accompanied the physical exhibits, giving visibility to creators often overlooked in mainstream fashion.

A seminar titled *Crafting Future – Cultural Heritage Driven Research* further explored the role of sustainability, inclusivity, and digital innovation in preserving traditional crafts. The exhibition was later showcased at the University of Reading (23 September 2025), generating interest in cross-cultural collaboration and digital preservation. These events advanced academic partnerships, inspired emerging designers, and amplified global appreciation for Sri Lanka's weaving heritage.



Until next time

Thank you for being an integral part of the Textile R community.

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