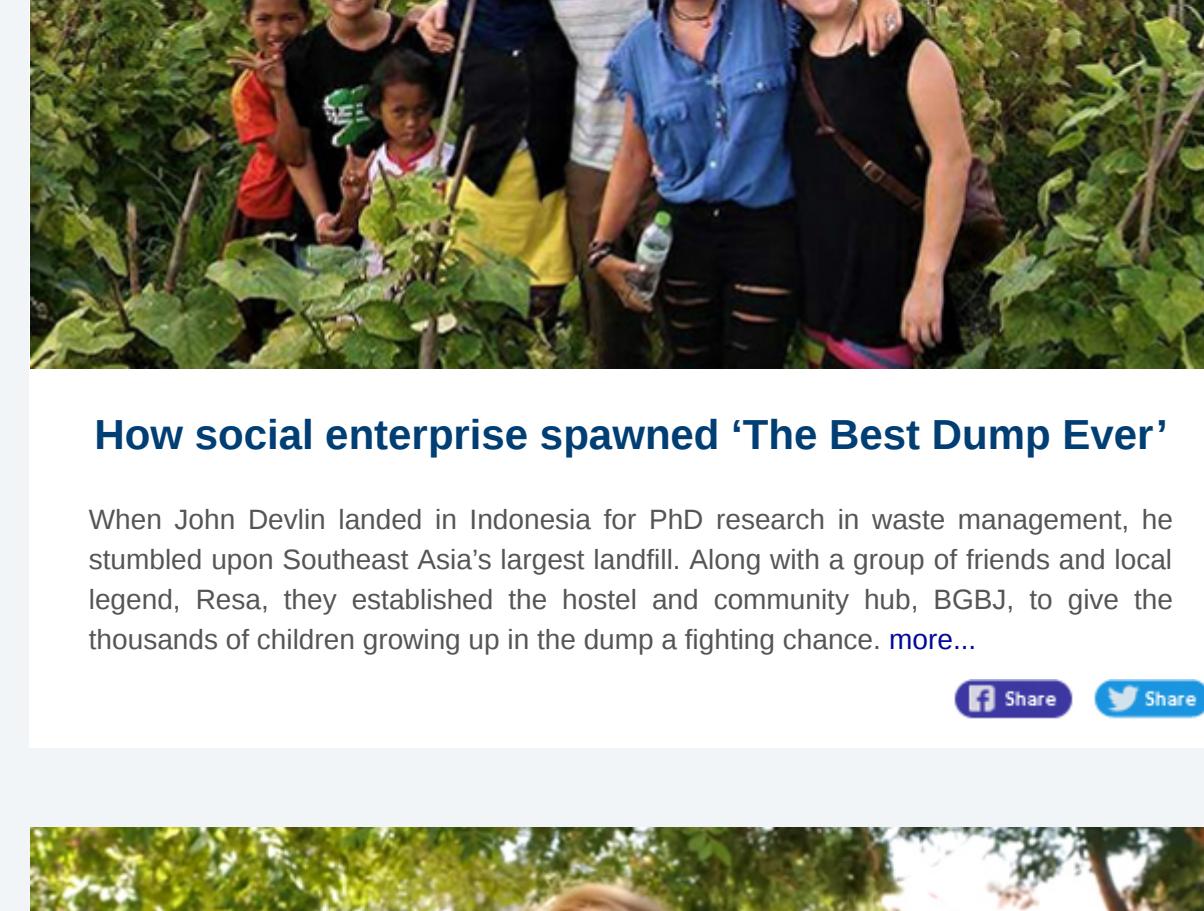


**Gavin Wangaeneen believes role models are the key to building future leaders**

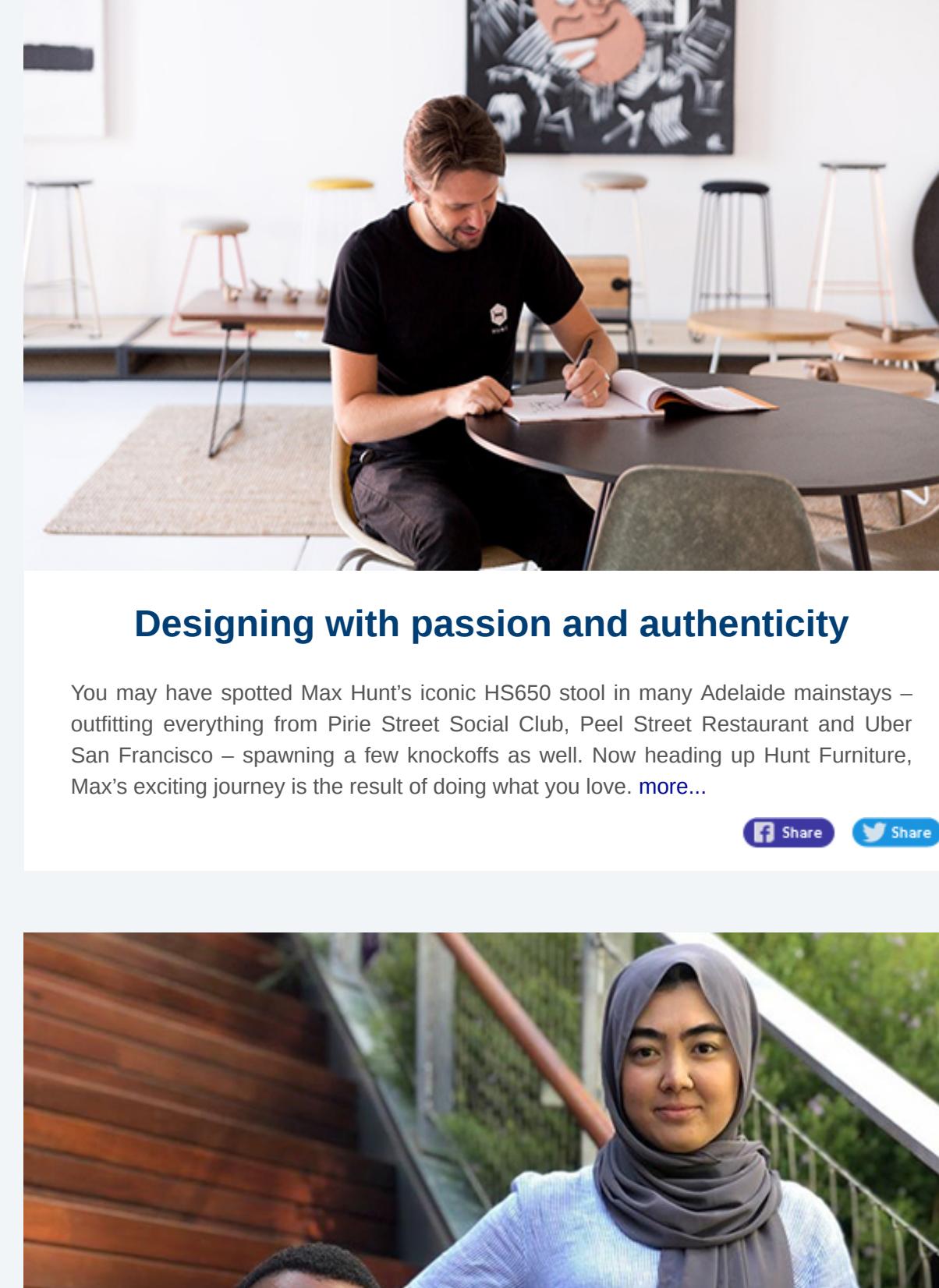
The Gavin Wangaeneen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship (GWATSI) was established 16 years ago with the simple goal of supporting disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete a university degree, particularly those with a strong desire to succeed and give back to their community. [more...](#)

[Facebook Share](#) [Twitter Share](#)**How social enterprise spawned 'The Best Dump Ever'**

When John Devlin landed in Indonesia for PhD research in waste management, he stumbled upon Southeast Asia's largest landfill. Along with a group of friends and local legend, Resa, they established the hostel and community hub, BGBJ, to give the thousands of children growing up in the dump a fighting chance. [more...](#)

[Facebook Share](#) [Twitter Share](#)**UniSA researchers reducing the risk of antimicrobial resistance**

Antimicrobial resistance threatens the effective prevention of infections and is an increasingly serious threat to global public health. Dr Barbara Drippe's research is working to eliminate antibiotics from our wastewater. Look out for UniSA's next **Enterprising Research Talk**, 6 May, for more information on how we are combatting antimicrobial resistance. [more...](#)

[Facebook Share](#) [Twitter Share](#)**Designing with passion and authenticity**

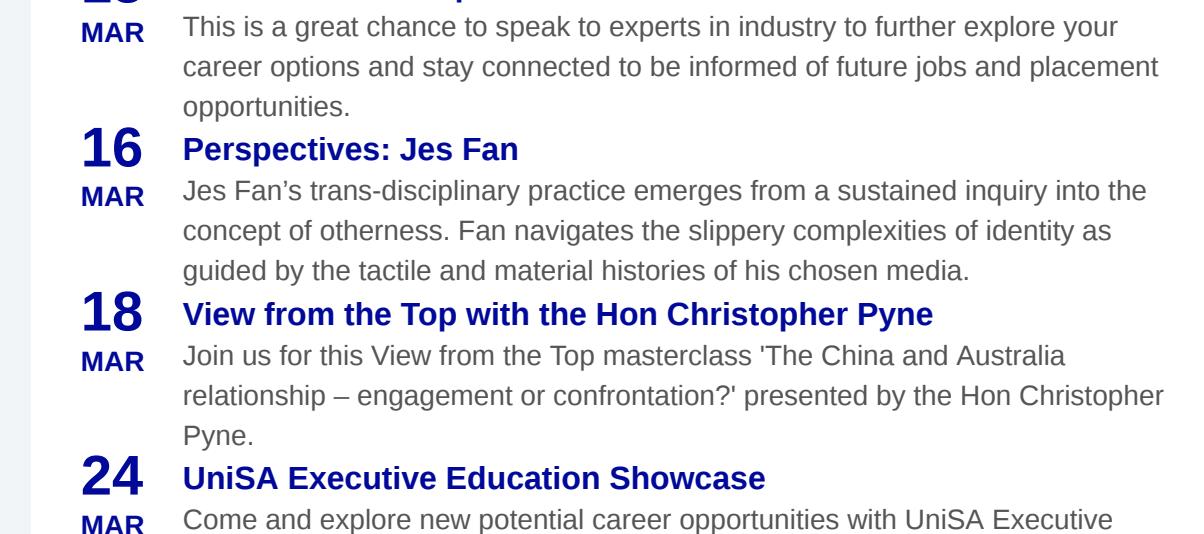
You may have spotted Max Hunt's iconic HS650 stool in many Adelaide mainstays – outfitting everything from Pirie Street Social Club, Peel Street Restaurant and Uber San Francisco – spawning a few knockoffs as well. Now heading up Hunt Furniture, Max's exciting journey is the result of doing what you love. [more...](#)

[Facebook Share](#) [Twitter Share](#)**UniSA Student Refugees' journey to peace**

Two remarkable alumni from University of South Australia College both from refugee backgrounds, have been given the opportunity to make a positive and substantial difference in their UniSA community thanks to the Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs and their Multicultural Affairs & Citizenship Program. [more...](#)

[Facebook Share](#) [Twitter Share](#)**Bridging gaps to connect students to industry**

GroupGH has been delivering highly personalised accounting, financial planning and information technology to individuals for over 40 years. Now, the firm has developed a special partnership with the UniSA Business School's Business Careers Mentor Program by dipping into the University's immense talent pool for recruits. [more...](#)

[Facebook Share](#) [Twitter Share](#)**Alumni Events**

04 MAR **MBA Info Session** Join us at one of our MBA information sessions to network with our MBA team, staff and alumni, meet your potential peers, and learn more about UniSA's 5-star MBA experience.

08 MAR **International Women's Day Talks at WOMADelaide** WOMADelaide offers a rich variety of programming initiatives, including the popular Planet Talks discussion forum. The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre is proud to co-present two of the festival's talks.

13 MAR **UniSA Careers Expo** This is a great chance to speak to experts in industry to further explore your career options and stay connected to be informed of future job and placement opportunities.

16 MAR **Perspectives: Jes Fan** Jes Fan's trans-disciplinary practice emerges from a sustained inquiry into the concept of otherness. Fan navigates the slippery complexities of identity as guided by the tactile and material histories of his chosen media.

18 MAR **View from the Top with the Hon Christopher Pyne** Join us for this View from the Top masterclass 'The China and Australia relationship – engagement or confrontation?' presented by the Hon Christopher Pyne.

24 MAR **UniSA Executive Education Showcase** Come and explore new potential career opportunities with UniSA Executive Education. This free event provides a window into program offerings designed to address business challenges & professional development.

25 MAR **University of South Australia Networking Event - Sydney** Join UniSA's newest networking group by the Vice Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor will be joined by guest speaker Professor Timothy Olds, whose world-leading research explores daily influences on health outcomes in both children and adults.

Exhibitions

03 FEB **Sanaa: A Better World Through Creativity** Showcasing the work of contemporary African artists – from grassroots level to some of the continents leading artists, this exhibition includes artwork from Africa's street artists, prolific visual artists and photographers.

24 FEB **2020 Adelaide/International** Samstag presents the 2020 Adelaide/International featuring five distinct exhibitions by Australian and overseas arts practitioners opening 28 February.

12 JUN **MOD: Seven Siblings from the Future** Meet the siblings and help to shape the future of Eucalara through the choices that you make. SEVEN SIBLINGS FROM THE FUTURE asks what sort of future we want for South Australia. [more...](#)

[See all events ...](#)

>> [Image gallery: UniSA alumni events](#)

Alumni website | Alumni Giving | Alumni Business Directory | Contact us

[Update your details ...](#)[Facebook](#) [YouTube](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Instagram](#)

© 2020 University of South Australia CRICOS Provider No 00121B | [View our privacy statement](#)

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY: While every effort is made by the University to ensure that accurate information is disseminated through this medium the University of South Australia makes no representation about the content and suitability of this information for any purpose. It is provided 'as is' without express or implied warranty.

Gavin Wanganeen believes role models are the key to building future leaders



Contemporary artist, AFL legend and Brownlow Medallist, Gavin Wanganeen, is an undisputed role model for his supporters – both young and old, indigenous or otherwise – since he burst onto the football scene more than three decades ago.

Only months before Wanganeen earned a second premiership title with Port Adelaide in 2004, he used his influence to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education at the University of South Australia.

"Football has given me some wonderful opportunities in my life, a strong sense of achievement and an understanding that role models can make a difference to people's lives," says Wanganeen.

"I believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids need a range of role models – some in sport but also, teachers, business leaders, nurses, researchers, and other careers."

"The Gavin Wanganeen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships aim to assist more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to attend university so they can contribute by becoming leaders in Australia, and good examples for Aboriginal Australian children across the country."

Since 2004, 615 like-minded donors have made more than 3,000 transformative gifts to the fund, enabling a total of 45 students to undertake their vital university studies.



Gavin Wanganeen and recipient Rachael Anderson at the 2019 Scholarship & Grants Ceremony

Each of these generous supporters of Aboriginal education have helped to break down barriers to enable a brighter future for these students and build a better tomorrow.

Among the 45 students is 21-year-old UniSA Bachelor of Education (Primary) student, Rachael Anderson, a passionate advocate of education determined to make a difference for Aboriginal Peoples through creative learning, song, and dance.

Rachael, a young Adnyamathanha woman from Whyalla, is in her second year at university and while she only received the CWATSIIS in 2019, its clear it has already made an immeasurable difference.

"Receiving the Gavin Wanganeen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship in 2019 has been one of my greatest achievements in my academic life," she says.

"Coming from the country, settling into moving four hours away from home and family was rough, and with the added challenges of university, it was often more overwhelming than joyous."

"One of the challenges my family and I faced was financially ensuring that university continued to be a realistic and viable opportunity for myself to achieve my dream of becoming an inspiring educator to our younger people."

"This scholarship also allowed me to have access to much needed learning tools and I was no longer having to train into university each night after working long hours that impacted my safety and wellbeing."



Donors and recipients join Gavin and his family at UniSA's Gavin Wanganeen Scholarship event in 2019

Awarded Whyalla's Youth Female Citizen of the Year and Principal's Citizen of the Year awards for her involvement in school and community activities, giving back comes naturally to Rachael. So it is only fitting she's dedicated her life to education.

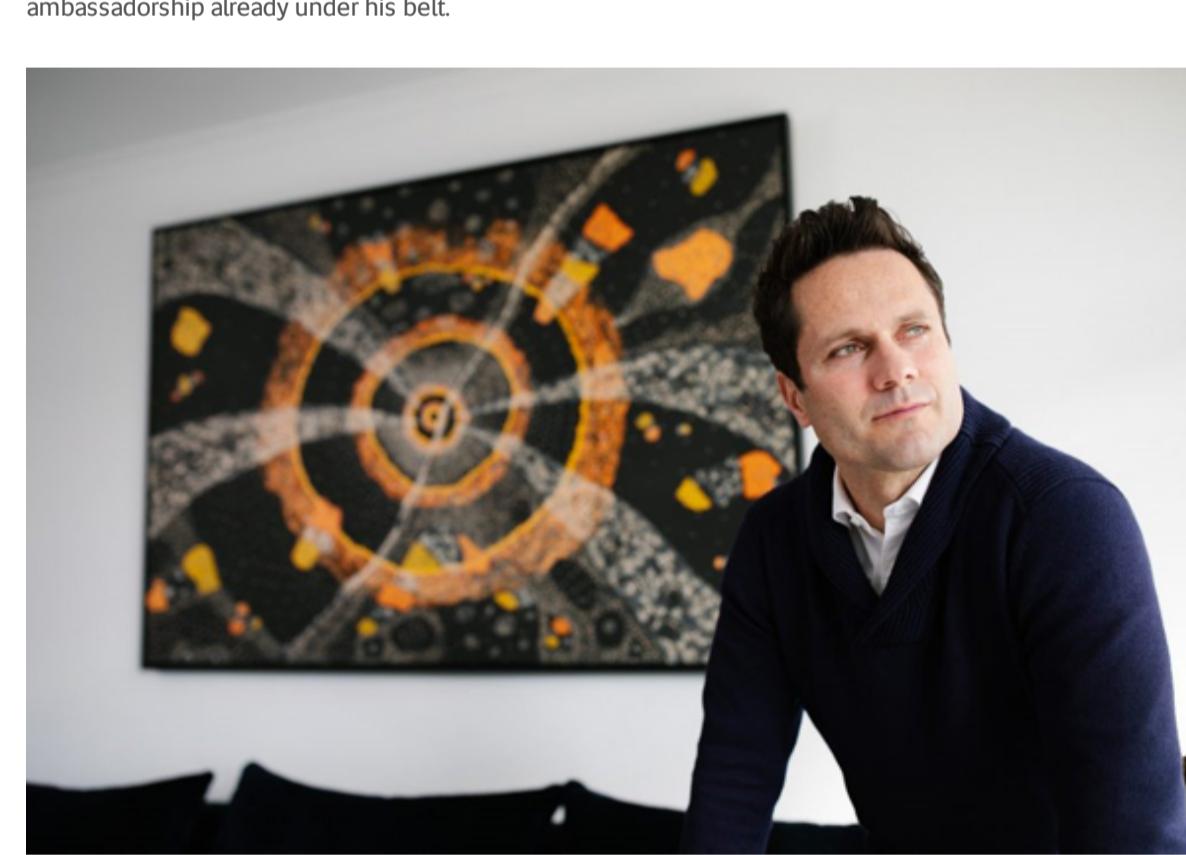
She recognises the invaluable opportunity the Gavin Wanganeen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship provides and the strength it has given her towards her future teaching goals.

"I am now working as an Aboriginal Community Education Officer at Memorial Oval Primary School instilling positive growth mindsets in the young ones and supporting the families in our community to value education as a powerful tool," Rachael says.

"Receiving this scholarship meant that I was given the gift of empowerment, instilling confidence in myself to take on roles in education right now that can make positive impacts in our community."

"I was able to forge long-lasting relationships with some very respectable educators and community members that can ensure I will never be left without an opportunity to make positive, driving impact in the future for Aboriginal education."

Following his retirement from football, Gavin has been pursuing his passions and breaking new ground as a celebrated contemporary Aboriginal artist as well. He has two solo exhibitions and a 2019 Adelaide Fringe ambassadorship already under his belt.



Gavin Wanganeen in front of his original 'Shooting Star' artwork

As a descendant of the Kokatha Mula people from northern region of South Australia, his art honours these ancestral links and their strong connection to country and culture, with the night sky and stories in the stars an inspired motif throughout many of his pieces.

Gavin's dedication to encouraging positive life choices through sport, education, and Aboriginal culture can be seen in his recent collaboration with Haigh's and donating all proceeds to the Scholarship Fund.

"I'm so honoured to have played a part in the establishment of the Gavin Wanganeen Scholarship. I couldn't be more proud of the scholarship's history and the inspired stories that have come from these 45 recipients," he says.

"Just the confidence that the individual gets being awarded this scholarship, it just gives them a big buzz and gives them that air of belief."

"The students who have finished their degrees, they are actually role models themselves now so that's really important, especially for the next batch of kids who are coming up behind them. They can offer them the support and they're going to be looked up to now, and that's really important."

"Hopefully when I'm long gone, this scholarship will still be around."

What does the future look like when we build it together?

Support students with a desire to succeed and give back to their communities.
100% of your gift will go directly to support the Gavin Wanganeen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship – there are no administration fees, no overheads and no hidden costs.
This way you can ensure that your money is put to work immediately giving extra support to students with real potential.

[Donate here](#)

[Share](#) [Share](#)

[Back to story index](#)

How social enterprise spawned 'The Best Dump Ever'



John Devlin

Master of Environmental Management and Sustainability (Natural Resource Management)

Co-Founder of BGBJ & PhD Student

Just outside of Jakarta in Bekasi, Indonesia stand 50-metre high colossal mountains of rubbish. 20

kilometres away from the rapidly developing city are more than 100 hectares of makeshift valleys and

towering cliffs of decaying waste that make up the Bantar Gebang landfill.

In just 30 years the area – previously teeming rice fields – has become southeast Asia's biggest landfill with

sometimes more than 8000 tonnes of rubbish dumped each day.

When University of South Australia PhD student, John Devlin, researching waste management in developing

mega-cities, landed in Jakarta inhabited by over 10 million people, he was struck by the amount of people

living amongst the waste.

It's estimated 6000 families' lives revolve around the landfill – former rice farmers swallowed up by the

relentless tide of rubbish and generations of scavengers salvaging materials from the dump – scaling the

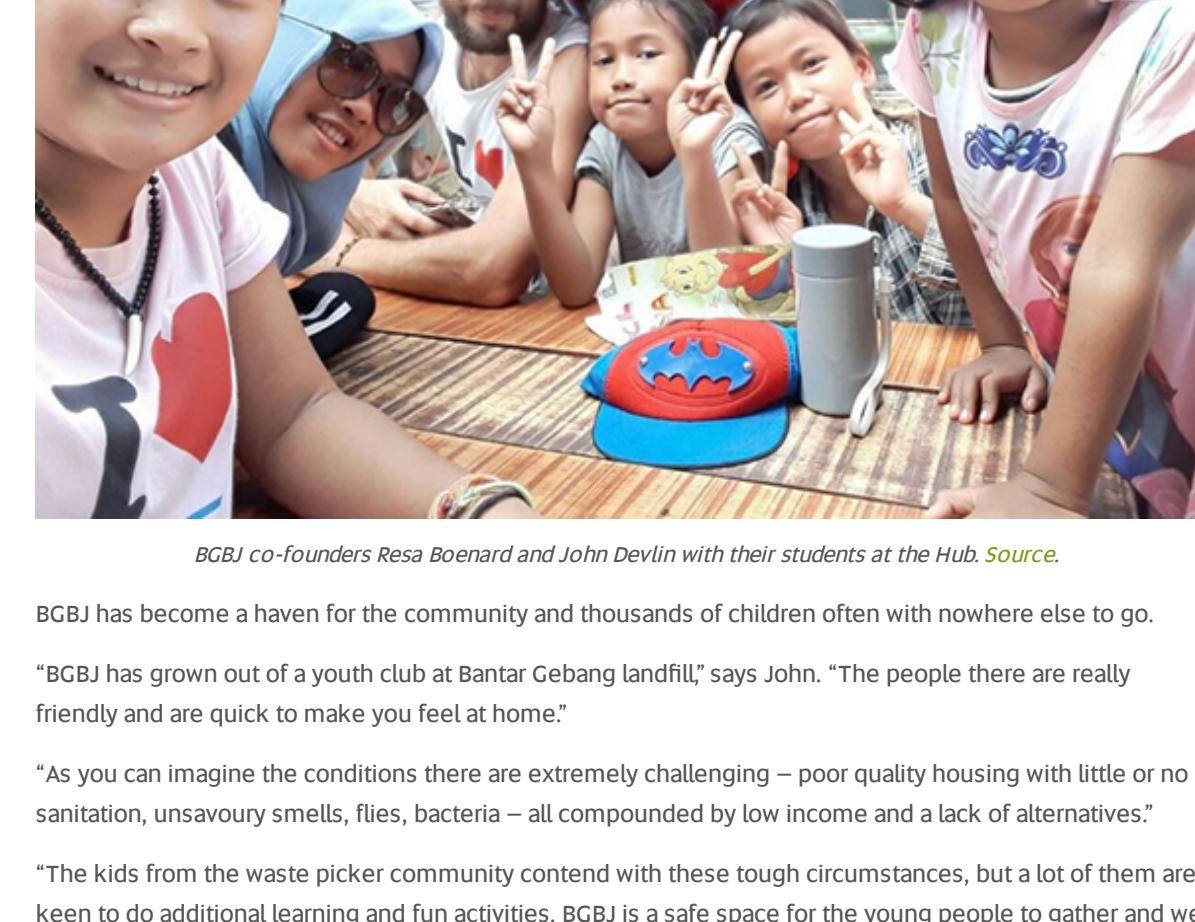
mountains and struggling to escape the cycle of poverty.

In an effort to counteract the disillusionment in the area and the reality of the appalling conditions (poor

quality housing, work-related injuries, lack of sanitation and disease included), John and local friend,

the indomitable Resa Boenard, established BGBJ – an inspired social enterprise functioning both as a

community hub and hostel.



BGBJ co-founders Resa Boenard and John Devlin with their students at the Hub. Source.

BGBJ has become a haven for the community and thousands of children often with nowhere else to go.

"BGBJ has grown out of a youth club at Bantar Gebang landfill," says John. "The people there are really

friendly and are quick to make you feel at home."

"As you can imagine the conditions there are extremely challenging – poor quality housing with little or no

sanitation, unsavoury smells, flies, bacteria – all compounded by low income and a lack of alternatives."

"The kids from the waste picker community contend with these tough circumstances, but a lot of them are

keen to do additional learning and fun activities. BGBJ is a safe space for the young people to gather and we

provide supporting services and trips away."

"All it started with was a bunch of friends getting together on a regular basis helping to make small

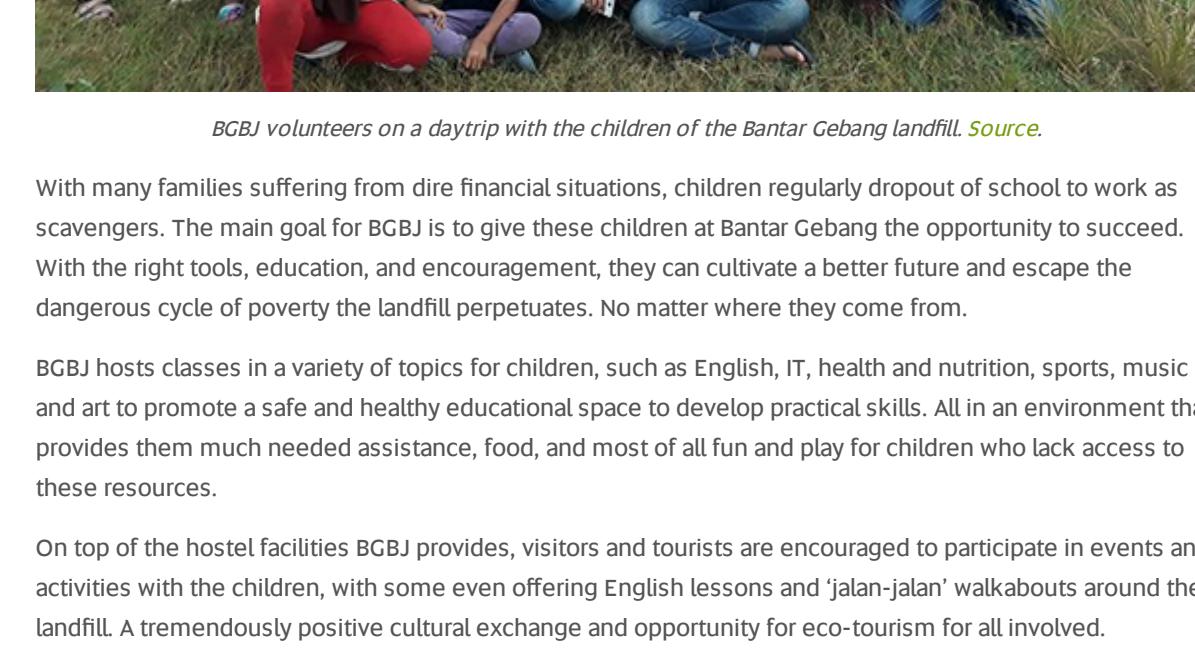
improvements. After a while this started attracting a bit more attention and the project took on a life of its

own."

BGBJ translates to 'The Seeds of Bantar Gebang', as biji biji means the seeds in Indonesian. Co-founder, Resa

– who grew up in the landfill herself – describes the children and young people of Bantar Gebang as the

seeds for a positive future at the landfill.



BGBJ volunteers on a daytrip with the children of the Bantar Gebang landfill. Source.

With many families suffering from dire financial situations, children regularly dropout of school to work as

scavengers. The main goal for BGBJ is to give these children at Bantar Gebang the opportunity to succeed.

With the right tools, education, and encouragement, they can cultivate a better future and escape the

dangerous cycle of poverty the landfill perpetuates. No matter where they come from.

BGBJ hosts classes in a variety of topics for children, such as English, IT, health and nutrition, sports, music

and art to promote a safe and healthy educational space to develop practical skills. All in an environment that

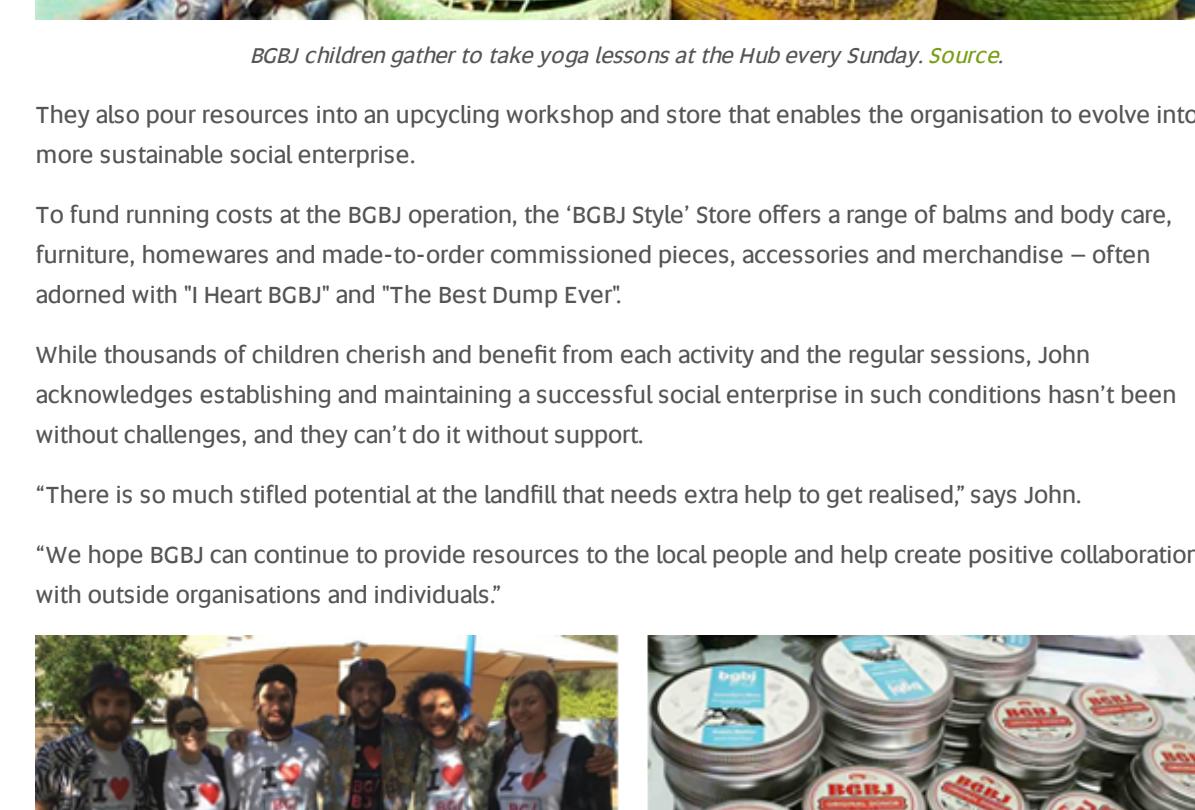
provides them much needed assistance, food, and most of all fun and play for children who lack access to

these resources.

On top of the hostel facilities BGBJ provides, visitors and tourists are encouraged to participate in events and

activities with the children, with some even offering English lessons and 'jalan-jalan' walkabouts around the

landfill. A tremendously positive cultural exchange and opportunity for eco-tourism for all involved.



BGBJ children gather to take yoga lessons at the Hub every Sunday. Source.

They also pour resources into an upcycling workshop and store that enables the organisation to evolve into a

more sustainable social enterprise.

To fund running costs at the BGBJ operation, the 'BGBJ Style' Store offers a range of balms and body care,

furniture, homewares and made-to-order commissioned pieces, accessories and merchandise – often

adorned with 'I Heart BGBJ' and 'The Best Dump Ever'."

While thousands of children cherish and benefit from each activity and the regular sessions, John

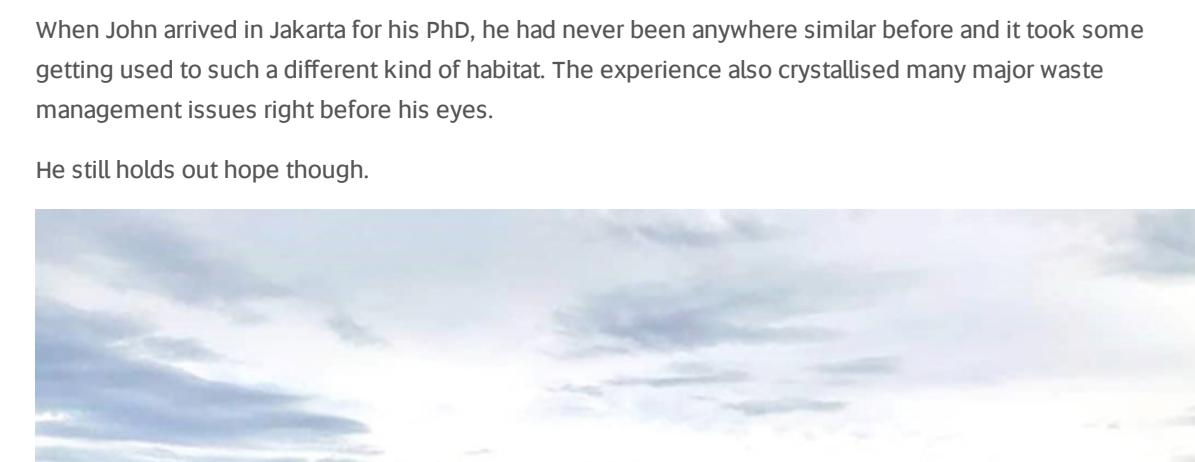
acknowledges establishing and maintaining a successful social enterprise in such conditions hasn't been

without challenges, and they can't do it without support.

"There is so much stifled potential at the landfill that needs extra help to get realised," says John.

"We hope BGBJ can continue to provide resources to the local people and help create positive collaborations

with outside organisations and individuals."



The start of the BGBJ Style Store. Source.

As a result, the BGBJ team are currently fundraising to develop a library and music studio that will

significantly increase the amount of people who can attend services and also provide a better learning

environment. They also hope this project will include a rooftop vegetable garden that can provide for

communal mealtimes.

"If someone is short of time, then any organisation like us needs cash to get the required resources, so

giving donations or purchasing the products and services of the social enterprise keeps the operation alive,"

says John.

"Even \$5 could pay for a bag of rice that gets cooked up for the kid's free Sunday lunch, or go towards band-

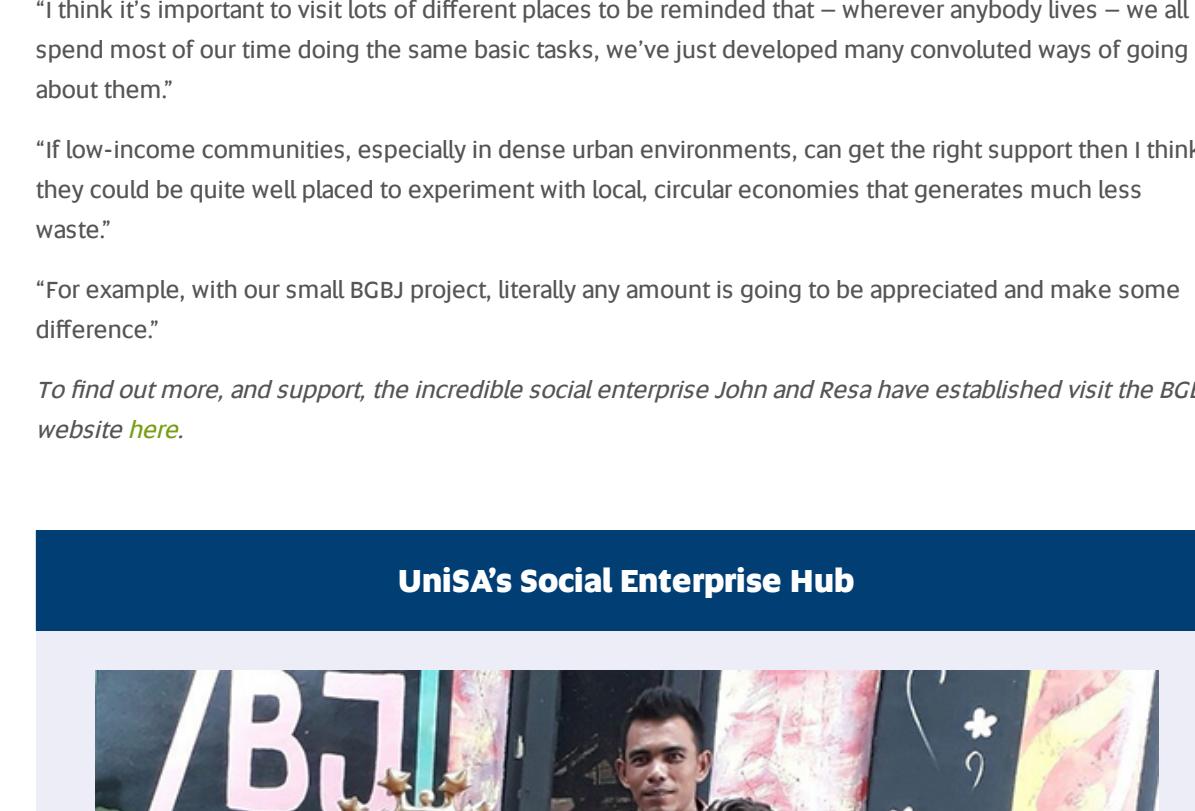
ads, pens, paper or a big jug of water. So, don't worry about the amount, just follow the urge to donate."

When John arrived in Jakarta for his PhD, he had never been anywhere similar before and it took some

getting used to such a different kind of habitat. The experience also crystallised many major waste

management issues right before his eyes.

He still holds out hope though.



"There isn't much good coming from all this outrageous waste creation, especially when it leads to

pollution," he says. "The longer we leave it, the harder it will be to clean up."

"I think it's important to visit lots of different places to be reminded that – wherever anybody lives – we all

spend most of our time doing the same basic tasks, we've just developed many convoluted ways of going

about them."

"If low-income communities, especially in dense urban environments, can get the right support then I think

they could be quite well placed to experiment with local, circular economies that generates much less

waste."

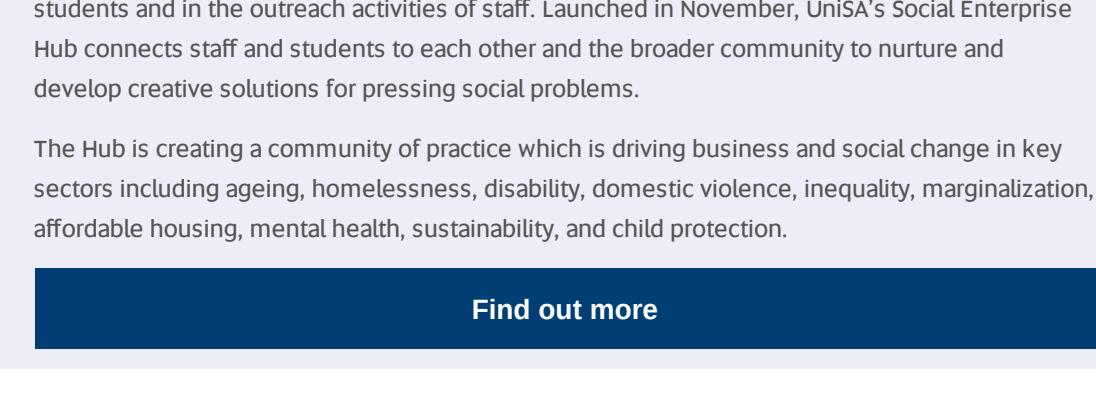
"For example, with our small BGBJ project, literally any amount is going to be appreciated and make some

difference."

To find out more, and support, the incredible social enterprise John and Resa have established visit the BGBJ

website here.

UniSA's Social Enterprise Hub



If you want to connect with more of our alumni and UniSA community doing great things in the

social enterprise and social innovation, be sure to visit UniSA's very own Social Enterprise Hub.

UniSA has both acknowledged the contribution social enterprise makes to the economy and

society regionally, nationally and globally and has sought to embed it within the learning of

students and in the outreach activities of staff. Launched in November, UniSA's Social Enterprise

Hub connects staff and students to each other and the broader community to nurture and

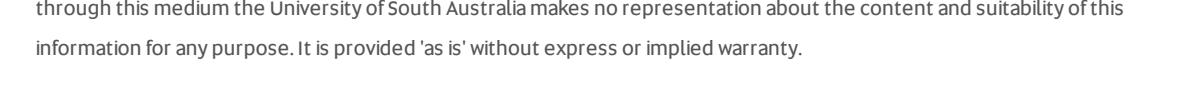
develop creative solutions for pressing social problems.

The Hub is creating a community of practice which is driving business and social change in key

sectors including ageing, homelessness, disability, domestic violence, inequality, marginalization,

affordable housing, mental health, sustainability, and child protection.

[Find out more](#)



[Back to story index](#)

Designing with passion and authenticity



Max Hunt
Director & Designer, **Hunt Furniture**
Bachelor of Design (Product Innovation)

When Max graduated from what was then called the product innovation program at UniSA in 2011, he had hopes of practicing as an industrial designer. Things didn't quite go to plan – but the success and ubiquity of Max's business, **Hunt Furniture**, since its inception soon after graduation, speaks for itself.

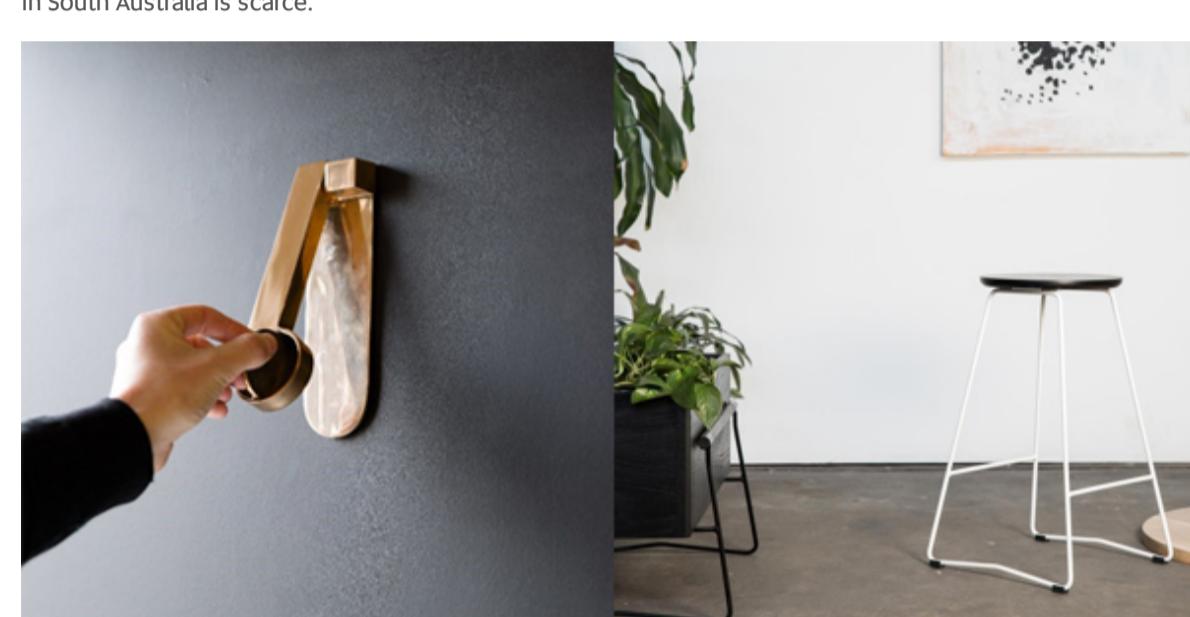
"Initially I thought I'd be a pure industrial designer who designed a little furniture, but I ended up the other way around," says Max. "I decided to continue to push through with self-initiated projects until something worked. Expect nothing but the unexpected."

Though often dismissed in terms of career opportunities, Max sees South Australia as a prime destination for furniture design thanks to its long history of craftsmanship that has resulted in irreplaceable expertise.

It is true that South Australia has a rich history of local knowledge in furniture design and manufacturing. Many staples of the mid-century modern – for some the golden era of Australian design – were locally designed and made.

National players T.H Brown, Leo Corci and E.R Noblett all called Adelaide home. Small to medium generational manufacturers thrived, and demand for these pieces steadily grew. A fascination with this influential era in South Australian design persists – original modernist pieces that carry the T.H Brown or Noblett seal are a staple for vintage stores, second-hand sellers and collectors, and fetch a high price for their notoriety.

Since the collapse of the manufacturing sector, a gap between history and cultural knowledge has emerged. A catalogue essay that accompanied a 2018 exhibition at Adelaide's JamFactory acknowledged the difficulty of tracking the industry's development: "the furniture manufacturing industry has been overlooked in records of the State's relatively short history since colonisation ... information about furniture manufacturing in South Australia is scarce."



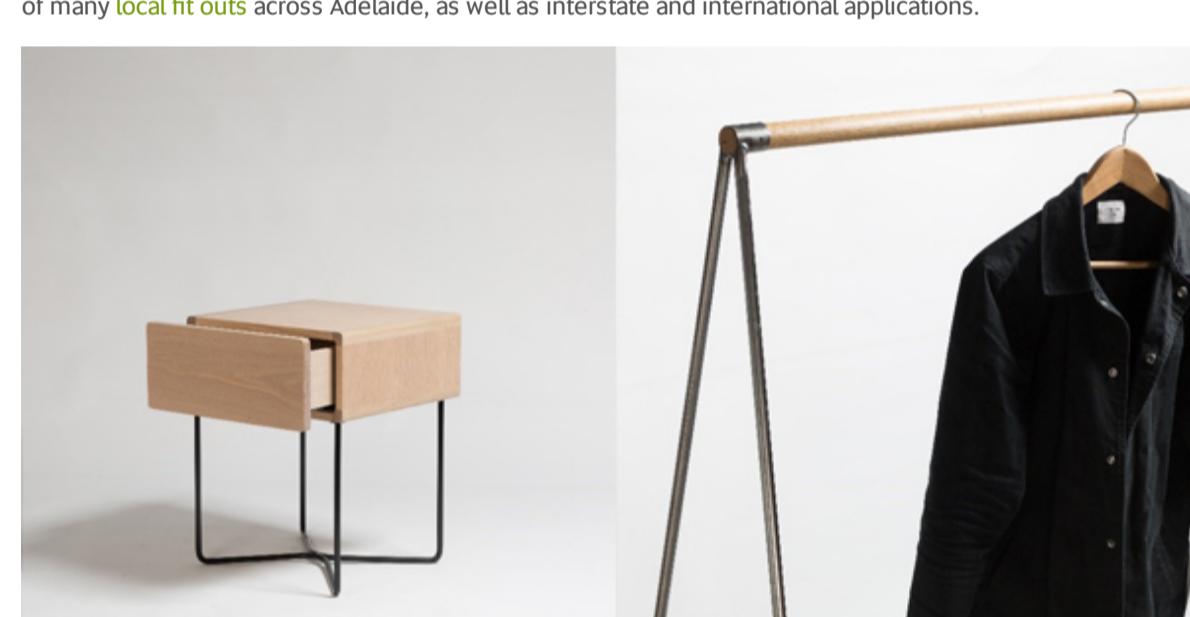
Bang Bang, hand cast bronze door knocker. Image: supplied | H5650 stool. Image: supplied

In more recent history, local conditions have driven changes in the strategies used to produce pieces. New manufacturing techniques emerged, facilitating unique combinations of industry production and hand-finishing, and mirroring concurrent architectural developments in a melding of disciplines that would come to characterise 21st century design trends. In South Australia, these strategies have survived better than elsewhere.

"We have an amazing wealth of manufacturing knowledge right here and we are very competitively priced," says Max. "South Australia should be a destination for designers all over Australia to make their products."

Hunt Furniture has operated for almost a decade on a philosophy of original design, local craftsmanship and collaboration. Born in the UK and immigrating to Australia as child, Max's early interests in art and design led to his pursuing industrial design.

He began working at a furniture retailer, moving to an electrical drafting job after university and eventually moving on to manage Hunt Furniture full-time. These days, Max's recognisably modern pieces are a feature of many [local fit outs](#) across Adelaide, as well as interstate and international applications.



S7500 bedside table. Image: supplied | H7600 garment rack. Image: supplied

Max cites influences far and wide, emphasising the importance of taking inspiration from outside of your discipline: "I can't just focus on one part of design. I like it all ... the big goal is to establish a multidisciplinary studio. Keep it interesting."

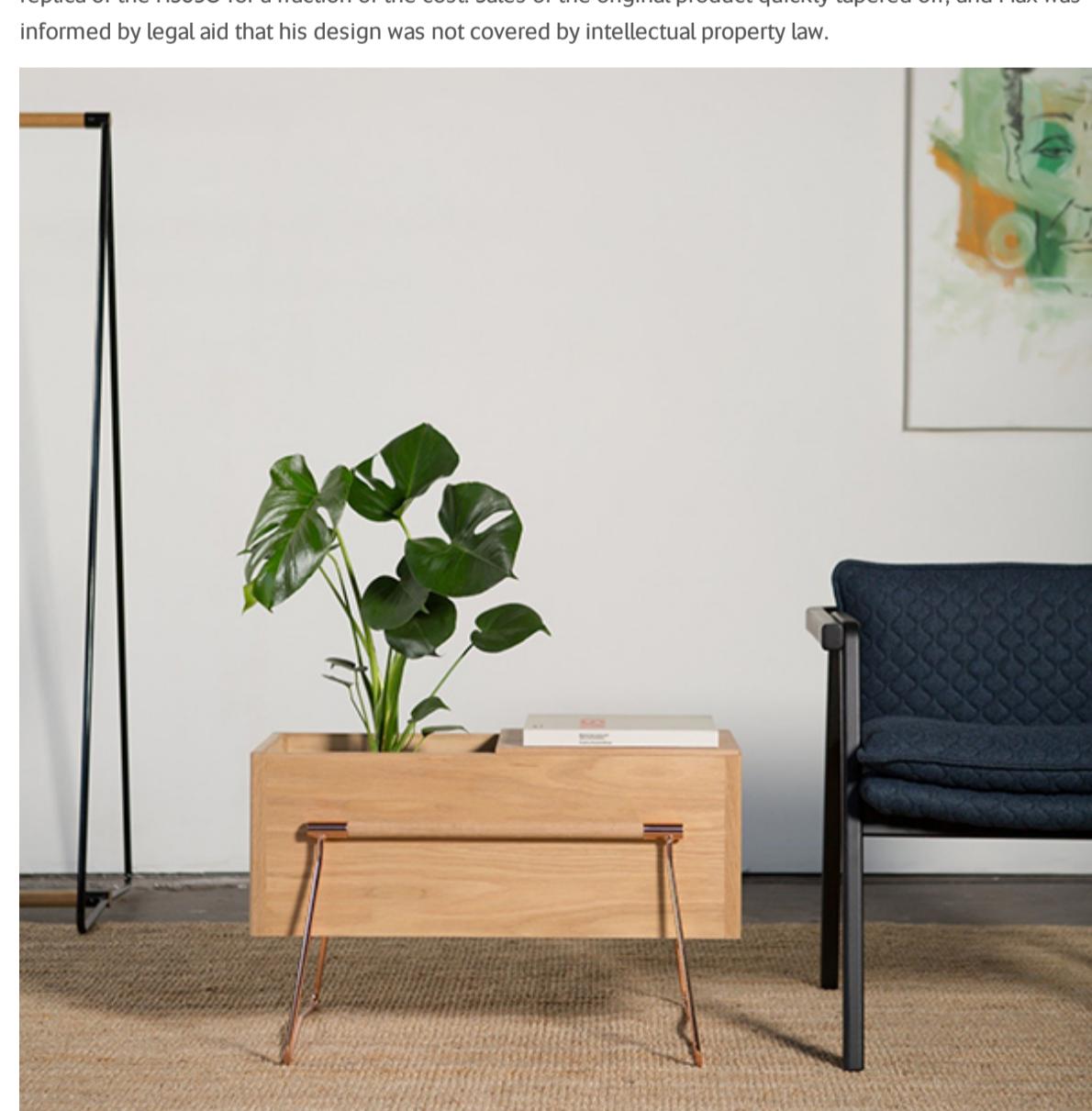
Hunt Furniture is known for authentic, original design and affordable prices that reflect the craftsmanship of each piece. Much of the changing of the South Australian furniture manufacturing industry was set in motion long before Hunt Furniture came into its own, so Max's goal is to build on the legacy and utilise the wealth of knowledge at his fingertips.

For many designers, finding a balance between high quality, authentic design and affordability presents a major challenge. When asked about the future of furniture design, Max points to Australia's rising problem with imitation and replica products as the design industry's major contemporary dilemma.

"It seems crazy that the laws around copyright and intellectual property that apply to a photographer or artist don't apply to design ... [corporations] should be held accountable for ripping off so many designers."

Like so many other designers and makers, Max has felt the effects of the replica industry. Still known to some as the Hunt stool thanks to its success, the **H5650** was inspired by the classic workshop stool found in sheds and studios across Australia. It was one of Hunt Furniture's earliest successes and one that put the burgeoning brand on the map.

In 2015, after approaching Hunt Furniture at a design fair in Melbourne, a major retailer released a near-exact replica of the **H5650** for a fraction of the cost. Sales of the original product quickly tapered off, and Max was informed by legal aid that his design was not covered by intellectual property law.



TOM side table / planter. Image: supplied

It's unfortunately a story that is all too familiar for designers, sellers and makers across Australia. In 2010, discontent with the state of Australian intellectual property law led to the creation of the [Authentic Design Alliance](#), an organisation that has campaigned heavily against the practice with a renewed focus in the last few years.

Despite a growing trend towards ethical and local consumption in some parts of the community in recent years, Max says this shift is not being felt at the base level that needs it most, and government response remains minimal.

"There needs to be a change in the law ... if we can't change the protection for designers, price always wins. Not many people want to buy something for \$300 from a designer if people mistake it for a \$25 stool from Kmart."

With this in mind, Max's advice for new students, recent graduates, and emerging creatives wondering how to navigate the minefield is simple but clear.

"Start designing and making and the rest will fall into place. Don't quit your day job if you don't have to. Build things people want. Learn new ideas. Pay yourself first. Be obsessed."

"Be authentic."

For more info about how tertiary study in product and industrial design at the University of South Australia can lead to a range of careers across design disciplines, visit the website [here](#).

 Share  Share

[Back to story index](#)

UniSA Student Refugees' journey to peace



Alphano Sayee and Shakila Orozgani; two University of South Australia College alumni, have both seen and experienced hardships as refugees that many would find difficult to fathom.

Thankfully, both are now thriving as UniSA students here in Adelaide and are using their own life experiences to support and guide other students from refugee backgrounds with funding from a Federal Fostering Integration Grant.

The Australian Government's commitment to a supportive and multicultural Australia led to the establishment of the Fostering Integration Grants Scheme to build cohesive and more resilient communities and promote Australia as a culturally diverse nation.

UniSA College has used the grant funding to initiate the Refugee Student Support Group with Alphonso and Shakila employed as the inaugural Peer Support Officers ably supported by Academic Director, Associate Professor Deirdre Tedmanson, Lecturer & Researcher, Dr Šnjezana Bilic, and Coordinator: Student Success, Teresa Thäl.

There has been a growing need to provide support for students from refugee backgrounds entering university study for a number of years. 25 per cent of UniSA College's ISOC students have experienced life as a refugee with many enduring significant psychological and emotional trauma as a result of this previous experience.

Many also continue to face ongoing financial and visa constraints that impact directly on their study. Hence there is pressing need to provide support for these students as they transition into Australian university life.



The UniSA Refugee Student Support Group after a successful focus group

Alphano Sayee spent most of his childhood in a refugee camp before arriving in Australia in late 2013. Originally from Ghana, West Africa, he is now studying a Bachelor of Social Work at UniSA after graduating from the College's Foundation Studies.

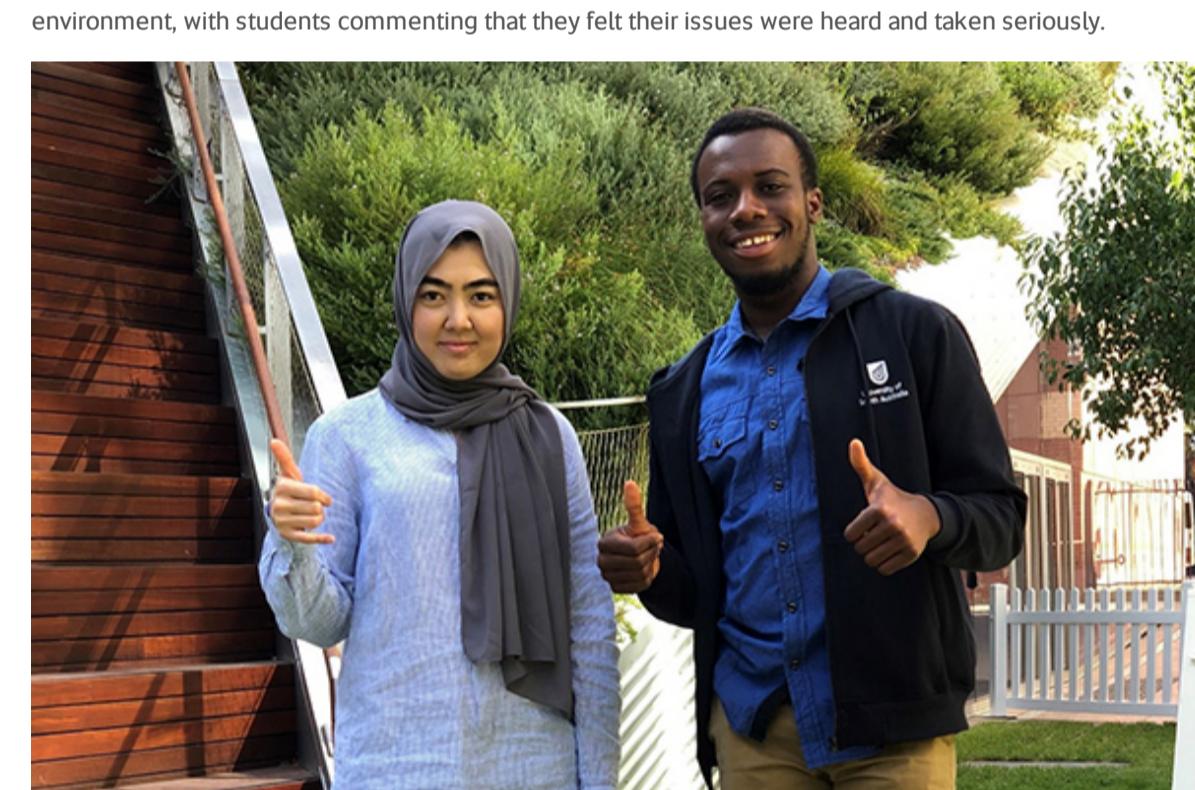
This charismatic and confident Refugee Student Peer Support Officer recognises the need for ongoing support.

"As a refugee, when you come to a new country, there are so many opportunities compared to where you came from. But how can we get the most out of these opportunities when there are major barriers – language, cultural, financial – for students to overcome," he says.

"Sometimes it's hard to integrate, you feel discriminated against because of your race or gender or religion. So, it was important to establish an association where we can actually speak about these issues so that others can feel free to express themselves."

The funding from the grant has enabled the establishment of the Refugee Student Support Group and throughout 2019 Alphonso and Shakila worked with a group of UniSA students from refugee backgrounds through a series of focus and steering groups to identify the challenges commonly faced.

The students spoke of their difficulties transitioning to a country with such vast cultural, gender, and religious divides. There were stories of social isolation and racism, where others actively avoided talking to students from refugee backgrounds. These stories were able to be shared in a safe, non-judgemental environment, with students commenting that they felt their issues were heard and taken seriously.



Peer Support Officers Shakila Orozgani and Alphano Sayee

One of the major issues to come out of these focus groups that Alphonso and Shakila were able to identify and address was the employment struggle of many of the students. Depending on a refugee's visa status, many students have to study and work at the same time, with financial support usually hard to come by, so the UniSA Careers Unit was enlisted to run workshops and equip them with vital employment skills.

Each student left the workshops with the skills to not only produce a professional resume and cover letter, but also the confidence to join and provide value in the workforce.

22-year-old, Shakila Orozgani, knows how important support from the university community can be. In 2019 Shakila was awarded the David Pank UniSA College Encouragement Prize after completing the Foundation Studies program. She described receiving the honour as a life-affirming new beginning after fleeing the violence and oppression of the Taliban in Afghanistan and arriving in Australia just two years ago.

"Growing up in the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan, which was then under Taliban rule, I was denied the basic right of going to school or university," Shakila says. "I'm the first girl in my family who has ever been given the chance to have an education."

Now thriving as a Laws student at UniSA, leading the Refugee Student Support Group is key for Shakila and her future ambitions to become a lawyer and act as an international advocate for refugee rights and a voice for the voiceless.

"I've been given the freedom to get an education to help myself and my family, but also contribute to Australia, to have value and worth as citizen," she says. "Now I have the opportunity to just study for the sheer joy of learning and enjoy university, to fully develop myself intellectually, culturally and socially."



A gathering of Refugee Support Group members at the 2019 Symposium

"The Refugee Support Group is a beautiful way to give back to the University community, to connect to students, and see the big steps they take with their confidence and the amazing things they achieve."

"I want to be a positive role model for people who want to pursue their goals and visions. To empower people – especially women and girls – to move beyond what they expected to do."

These two Refugee Student Peer Support Officers, Shakila and Alphonso, were motivated by the opportunity to help others and they took great care and pride in developing a safe, supportive environment so that students from a refugee background could connect with each other.

They recognise that most of these students come from war-torn backgrounds and that the most important thing for them is to establish a sense of peace and belonging at university. A need that few of us can understand without their first-hand experience.

Alphonso acknowledges the need to meet and have connections with people who have had similar journeys and background. He described one of most rewarding aspect of setting up this support group has been seeing some of the students feeling confident to voice their opinions, share their experiences and journeys.

"We were really motivated by this opportunity to help other people. If you are from that background, you have more understanding of the culture, as well as all the things they have seen so far."

"These students have seen quite a lot of struggles in their life, but people like us that have reached this point, can help and support them so they feel more motivated and more positive."

"At the beginning, some people hide their stories, but through this project they begin to feel comfortable with being vulnerable, they are feeling safe and developing a great sense of self-belief."

"In a refugee journey there are a lot of obstacles, but as long as you are motivated, that's going to guide you back – that's going to bring you back to life."

[Share](#) [Share](#)

[Back to story index](#)

Bridging gaps to connect students to industry



Partner & Director at GroupGH, and Senior UniSA Mentor in the University of South Australia's Business Careers Mentor Program (BCMP), Steve Bastian, has been an important part of nurturing the partnership between UniSA and the South Australian Chartered Accounting and Financial Planning Firm, GroupGH, that has now been a spring board for a number of talented UniSA alumni.

Understanding the importance of supporting the new generation of industry professionals – and remembering himself what it was like as a new graduate entering into the real world – the partnership between GroupGH and the UniSA Business School began in 2016, when Steve had been a mentor since 2013.

From an early age he could see the value of good advice, particularly for small businesses who often didn't have much support – the accountant was the first person they called for help.

Over these past seven years, Steve has found the University has provided so much support to both students and employers, as being part of the BCMP provided him with opportunities to get to know current students and alumni in a less daunting environment, than say an interview.

As well as building his professional network, over the years quite a few of the mentors have become friends and catch-up on both a professional and social basis.

"Until I became involved in the BCMP I was unaware of the career development programs UniSA has to offer to employers. As a result, I have grown my professional network so much through getting to know other peers who are also mentors in the program," Steve says.



GroupGH Director & Business Careers Mentor, Steve Bastian

In 2016 GroupGH was looking to recruit a graduate to join their team, wanting to find someone not only academically sound, but with the right cultural fit, an understanding of the 'real world' application of their studies.

GroupGH reached out to UniSA and started their journey sourcing high potential talent from the Business School. As a result, multiple recent graduates, including star Graduate Accountant, Rebecca Drescher a mentee in the Business Career Mentor Program, have joined the GroupGH family.

Rebecca had absolutely no idea what she wanted to do during school, but when enrolled in a double Bachelor of Applied Finance and Bachelor of Commerce she knew that maths was a stronger subject of hers. As she journeyed through her degree, it was clear she was enjoying more of the Applied Finance subjects, and eventually headed down the financial planning path.

After completing the Business Career Mentor Program in her last year of university, Rebecca recognised how much of a great support it was for entering into the working world.

With no previous employment history, her mentor, Rebecca Foster a fellow UniSA Bachelor of Commerce graduate, was able to guide her through the whole journey – from writing resumes to applying for jobs and tips for interviews – when during their time together she landed the GroupGH opportunity through the BCMP.

"The support from my mentor Rebecca Foster and the team at GroupGH helped me to win the Production Award in the Firm in 2019 after my first full year of work – something I would have never dreamt of," she says.

"Since starting work, I have gained so much confidence in myself and my abilities. This has transferred into my personal life as well where I have also been successful in taking on the role of treasurer of my netball club."

"I am still right at the start of my career journey, so I am enjoying being exposed to new tasks and jobs and being presented new challenges," she says. "However, I have received so much support from the team in order to achieve this."



GroupGH Graduate Accountant, Rebecca Drescher

Similarly, Rachelle Cheatle and Ty Bun, both UniSA alumni and current Graduate Accountants at GroupGH also got their breaks thanks to the Business School's BCMP and Steve Bastian's involvement.

Rachelle started her accounting career with GroupGH two days a week while in her third year at UniSA and continued until completing the last two years of her degree, after which she was offered a Graduate Accountant position with GroupGH.

"When I was a student, I was constantly thinking about landing a satisfying career. I was very keen on hearing all the tips and insights from industry professionals," she says.

"I would definitely like to give back to a business student, as I know how important it was for me to be connected with industry practitioners early on to assist me in transitioning from university to the workplace."

During his Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) at UniSA, Ty credits the BCMP as a vital step in his career now he has found success as an Accountant with GroupGH helping secure South Australian businesses and families with a fruitful financial future.

"Navigating through a business career can be overwhelming sometimes. But without mistakes and failure, you would never learn," he says.

"Helping students build relationships with industry leaders, connecting them with professionals, enabling them to get firsthand industry insights, and allowing them to practise professional networking skills is enormously helpful to current students."

To find out more about the UniSA Business School's Business Career Mentor Program, contact the Business Careers team on businesscareers@unisa.edu.au.

[Share](#) [Share](#)

[Back to story index](#)