

# Flatpack: Repacked



## Trash as Treasure

### Furniture found in Carlton's Hard Rubbish

RMIT PlaceLab expresses its gratitude to RMIT VE furniture design students: Casey Lay, Kaspian Kan and Tevuro Ihomana Montgomery; and Julian Pratt, Program Coordinator for Graphics, Furniture & Product Design in the College of Vocational Education, for their dedicated efforts in repairing these found furniture pieces.

# Repairing “Rubbish”

Talented students revitalised these hard rubbish finds from Carlton, taking them from trash to treasure!

We asked RMIT VE Furniture Design students to help us with our end of year exhibition, lending their awesome skills in furniture repair.

All of the furniture pieces you see here were collected during our field study of hard rubbish around the suburb of Carlton. Most of them were already in relatively good working order, but with a few hours of work and a few dollars spent on materials, they are looking better than ever!

## What other treasures might our hard rubbish piles hold?

We hope this exhibition makes you think more about the value of hardy materials, your existing furniture pieces, and the items that others might throw away.

### Next time...

- **Your furniture breaks –**  
See if you can repair it either using your own skills, online tutorials, or by going to a repair café
- **You go shopping –**  
Buy only what you will actually use, so that your new furniture doesn't end up in next year's hard rubbish pile
- **You no longer need a furniture piece –**  
See if you can gift it, or put it up online for free or for sale, before deciding to throw it out
- **You buy furniture –**  
Think about the longevity of the piece, and whether you might be able to get similar quality second-hand

*Images from before the restoration:*





## Cement Slab and Timber Coffee Table

### Steps to Improve the Item:

- Cement slab was removed from legs and sanded back.
- Cut-Outs were chamfered to remove chipped edges.
- Cement was re-sealed.
- Rubber rings/grommets added to timber that pierced the tabletop to increase security.
- Added spacers between the underside of the top and legs to add height/level the protruding timber to the cement top.
- Legs were aggressively sanded back to remove finish, surface mould and damage. Aggressive dents were steamed to reduce severity.
- Timber legs were stained with Brown Japan Proofint to improve modern aesthetics and to hide remaining water stains.
- Finished with an oil-based polyurethane.
- Rubber feet attached.

### Equipment Used:

- Iron
- Orbital Sander and discs
- File
- Rags
- Brushes

### Labour Taken:

**10 hrs**

### Materials Required:

Felt Roll	\$7.88
“o” Rings	\$11
Stain	\$9
Top Coat/Finish	\$10
Concrete Sealer	\$6.5
Sand Paper	\$6

### Money Spent:

**\$52.38**



## 3 Drawer Timber Side Table

### Steps to Improve the Item:

- All drawers were removed from the carcass and disassembled.
- Due to extensive damage, all drawer bases were removed and replaced with a new plywood base.
- Pre-existing finish sanded back until removed.
- Dents and scratches were steamed and sanded to reduce their severity/visibility.
- Broken interior locks removed.
- Holes in the drawer faces were filled with a contrasting timber.
- Drawer faces re-attached to boxes with improved alignment.
- Two coats of Danish Oil

### Equipment Used:

- Orbital Sander
- Jigsaw, Hand-Saw Or (pre-cut Bases)
- Cordless Drill Driver
- Drill Bits
- Shop Vac
- Tenon Saw -Phillips Driver Bit

### Labour Taken:

**6 hrs**  
per unit x 3

### Materials Required:

Felt Feet	\$4.90
Danish Oil	\$14.40
Sanding Discs	\$7
Disposable Brush	\$1.2
Sand-Paper	\$8.9
Plywood	\$17.32

### Money Spent:

**\$44.38**



## Outdoor 2-Seater

### Steps to Improve the Item:

- Entire piece scrubbed down and cleaned.
- Accumulated rust around welds treated and removed.
- Front left leg was manually bent outwards to level the legs.
- For the mild corrosion/rust around the bottom of the legs and missing feet, the legs were manually stripped and trimmed to remove remaining feet.
- New feet fastened from timber beads. Larger holes were drilled to accommodate the insertion of the leg. Smaller exit hole filled with a dowel.
- Beads adhered to metal legs with epoxy.
- Underside of the beads were flattened.
- Sections of metalwork were stripped of paint and prepped.
- New coat of paint with an epoxy enamel.
- Rubber Stoppers added to the underside of the feet to protect flooring and further raise chair from ground and water.

### Equipment Used:

- Cleaning supplies (Rags, Bucket, Sponges)
- Hacksaw
- Wire Brush - File
- Drill Bit
- Cordless Drill Driver
- Vice/Clamping Jig

### Labour Taken:

**9 hrs**

### Materials Required:

Timber Ball/Feet	\$4.90
Dowel	\$0.20
Black Epoxy Enamel	\$14.50
Rust Buster Remover	\$16.24
Sand-Paper	\$3
Sugar Soap/IPA	\$2.5

### Money Spent:

**\$44.38**



## Rip-Off Eames Plastic Moulded Side Chair

### Steps to Improve the Item:

- Plastic was scrubbed down/cleaned (note: photographs taken after cleaning)
- Legs initially incorrectly assembled and so they were re-assembled correctly.
- For water damage on the base of the timber legs, the water damage was Bleached. However, as the water damage was still obvious, the bottom of the legs were trimmed.
- Legs were sanded back and finished.
- Installed large rubber feet to regain some lost height, protect flooring and attempt to prevent further water damage on timber.

### Equipment Used:

- Cleaning supplies (Rags, Bucket, Sponges)
- Hex Key Set.
- Screw Driver
- Tenon/Dovetail/Hand Saw

### Labour Taken:

**3 hrs**

### Materials Required:

Rubber Feet	\$4.90
Timber Finish	\$2.30
Sugar Soap	\$1
Sand-Paper	\$3

### Money Spent:

**\$8.20**