

Case study

LOUSY INK

Lousy Ink is the **world's first 100% recycled artist ink**. Started as a two-person commitment to reducing unconscious waste, they promote more sustainable forms of art-making and provide an alternative to your leftover ink. Lousy Ink started in 2017 as a solution to the ink waste that was generated as a by-product of printer cartridge recycling.

- Lousy Ink is a prime example of the **circular economy in action**. It helps facilitate the zero waste to landfill guarantee of Cartridges 4 Planet Ark and Close the Loop.
- **Over 85,000 litres worth of ink** has been collected and stored since day one. **Diverting it from landfill prevents it from leeching toxic chemicals into ground soil.**
- Lousy Ink gives artists of all levels the platform to flourish, whilst helping keep our planet green along the way.

Since 2003, Cartridges 4 Planet Ark and its program partner, Close the Loop, have been delivering world class product stewardship and resource recovery solutions for printer cartridge waste.

From these products, Close the Loop makes end products like TonerPlas™, a premium asphalt additive, and eWood, a plastic timber alternative. What makes this process truly great, in terms of the circular economy, is its ability to inspire innovative business solutions to our waste as was the case with Lousy Ink.



Lousy Ink's vision is to turn waste into inspiration by recycling printer cartridge ink into sustainable art materials. Working in collaboration with Close the Loop and Cartridges 4 Planet Ark's collection program, they help divert waste generated by millions of printer cartridges across Australia.

By engaging with the creative community, they can not only inspire others with shared passions to engage with the circular economy, but they can also educate on the benefits of using waste as a resource.

Having already diverted thousands of tonnes of waste ink from going to landfill, Lousy Ink is helping show that repurposing waste is simply a new way of creating something different – and that sometimes different is better.

“Encouraging an innovative approach to waste materials changes perceptions on the value of our resources and how we can do so without continuing the strain on our environment.”

Oli Ruskidd
Lousy Ink Co-Founder

The circular economy works when manufactured resources are designed to no longer generate waste when they meet their end-of-life. Product stewardship schemes, like Cartridges 4 Planet Ark, are one of the methods that ensures there is a solution for even the hardest to recycle products.

Through the product take-back, resource recovery, and reuse initiatives with Close the Loop, millions of products have been diverted from landfill and converted into valuable new materials.



Once at Close the Loop, the printer cartridges are crushed down into their baser components of metal and plastic.

A by-product of this process, however, is that the **'waste' cartridges come with leftover reserves of ink.** This ink is filtered, to separate it from the plastic, and sent to Lousy Ink where it becomes their range of pens and ink. **Having avenues for reuse in the market creates incentives for innovation** in these areas, allowing for other businesses to follow suit.

Running a sustainable and community-first business has provided Lousy Ink the opportunity to grow as a modern business in a circular economy. The benefit of having businesses aware of the life cycle of their products **encourages more responsible practices in the market.**

By hosting a range of art exhibitions, they not only raise funds for charitable organisations but also inspire artists to create using Lousy Ink. Making the connection between meaningful change and personal engagement allows tangible and approachable **examples of the circular economy to make its way into mainstream consciousness.**

In recent years, Lousy Ink has expanded their offerings from artist ink, available in bottles and vials, to a range of fineliner pens, which are made from recycled plastics.

Finding a local manufacturer to work with waste plastics was initially difficult for Lousy Ink but, with the support of businesses in this space, will become easier as the ongoing development of re-purposed materials enters the market.

“We saw Lousy Ink as an opportunity to do more than what we could’ve done alone, and reach more people with a positive message. Even though we’re ‘just artists’, we’re trying to fight the climate crisis alongside the experts, activists and younger generations who will inherit this planet after us.”

Oli Ruskidd
Lousy Ink Co-Founder