

Repair Data

May-October 2023

A report by Repair Café Aotearoa New Zealand

Introduction

Repair Café Aotearoa New Zealand (RCANZ) has partnered with Restarters to collect data from repair cafés associated with RCANZ around Aotearoa New Zealand. Restarters is a global community of people who run local repair events and campaign for the Right to Repair. They have developed Restarters.net as a free, open-source toolkit for recording data from repair events and sharing repair information.

After an initial pilot in 2022, RCANZ worked with participating repair cafés to add repair event data to Restarters, with a focus on data for the six months of May to October 2023. RCANZ provided training and support to café volunteers throughout this process, both individually and through hui with repair café coordinators.

This report outlines the progress so far in collecting repair café data and highlights some of the initial findings.

Repair Cafés – groups and events – on Restarters

RCANZ is aware of 47 RCANZ-associated groups who ran repair cafés from May to October 2023. Of these, 41 are currently registered on Restarters, and 37 of those (79%) have entered substantially complete data and will be included in this analysis. This shows that repair cafés have a high level of commitment to capturing and entering data from repair cafés.

With regards to repair events, RCANZ is aware of 196 events conducted between May and October 2023, of which 160 (82%) are included in this analysis.

For more information, see the *Note on Data* at the end of this report.

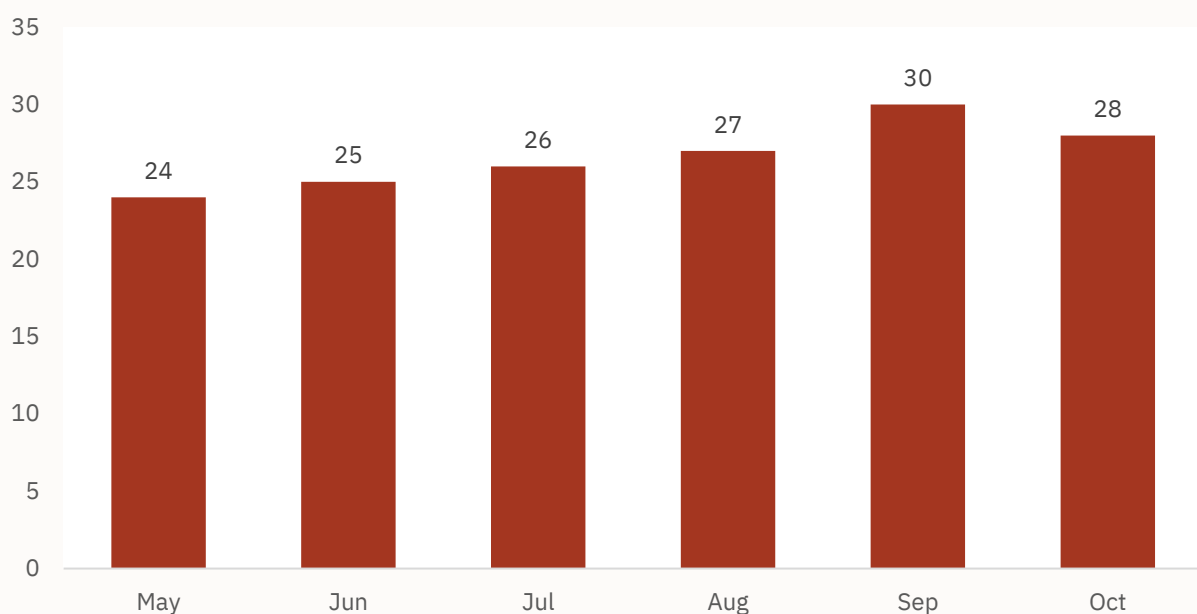


Figure 1 - Repair events by month, May-October 2023

Region	No. of groups	No. of repair events
Northland	4	40
Auckland	11	18
Waikato	2	7
Bay of Plenty	2	9
Hawke's Bay	2	12
Taranaki	1	3
Manawatu-Whanganui	3	17
Wellington	6	25
Nelson	1	6
Marlborough	1	6
Canterbury	3	14
Otago	1	3
Aotearoa New Zealand – total	37	160

Table 1 - Groups and repair events, May-October 2023

What does a repair event look like?

The size and frequency of repair events varied considerably between cafés. One group had small weekly events, while some groups had less frequent yet larger events. The average number of repair events held by each repair café over the study period was five– varying from weekly (one café) to one-off in the study period.

The **most common frequency was monthly**, with 13 groups running 5 or 6 events during the six months. Some of those groups with fewer events launched their repair café during the study period, and so were not in operation for the whole period. Of the two groups running events more frequently than monthly, one offered repair cafés at two separate locations each month, and the other facilitated two different events, with one on general repair and one focused on textiles. The average number of items presented at the 160 (in total) events was 29 items.

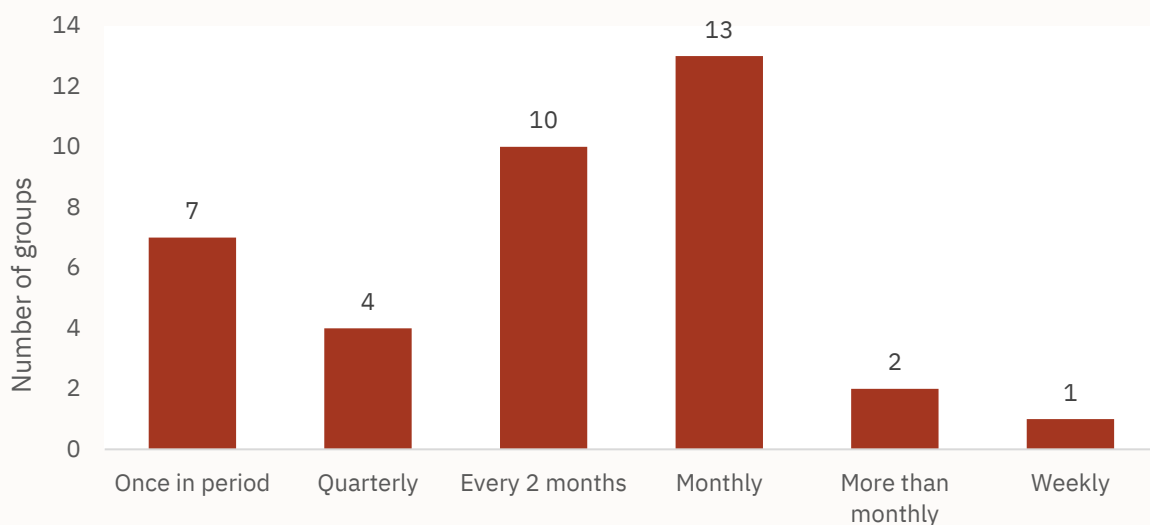


Figure 2 - Frequency of repair events, May-October 2023

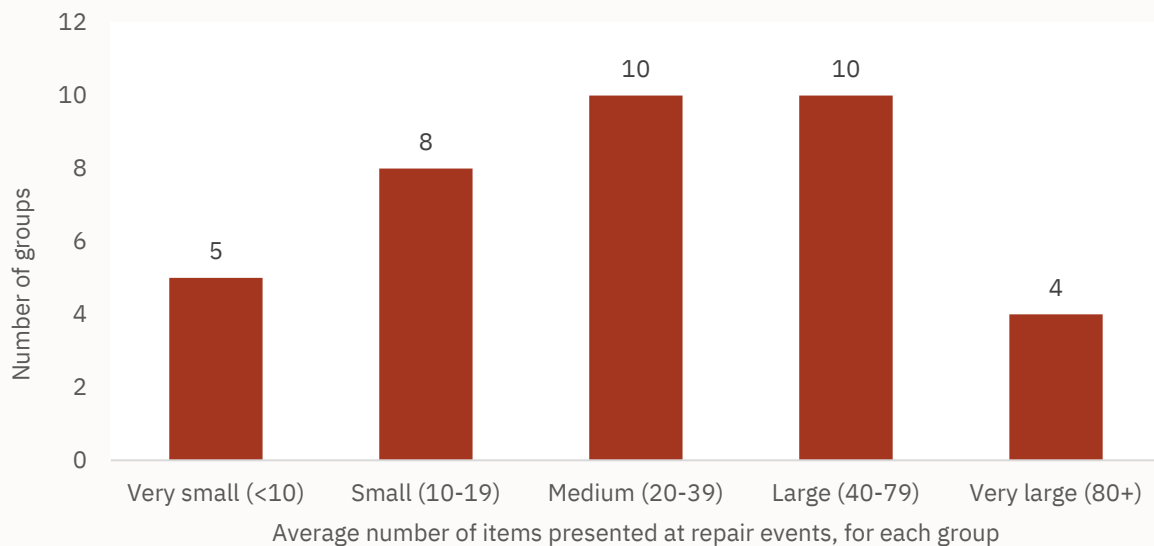


Figure 3 - Size of repair events, May-October 2023

In bringing together the number of repair events each group held, and the average number of items presented at each event, there appeared a **correlation between more frequently held repair cafés showing fewer items, and less frequently run repair cafés having more items presented**. However, there was considerable variation in the number of items assessed at repair cafés for any frequency, as can be seen in Figure 4.

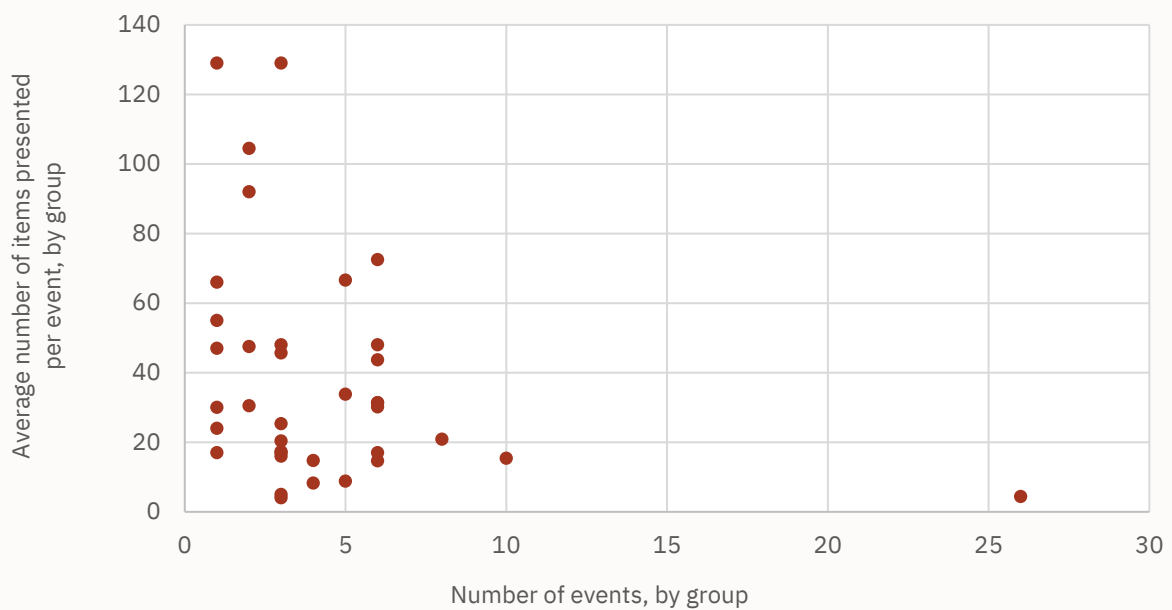


Figure 4 - Frequency and size of repair events, by group, May-October 2023

What is the impact of repair events?

For all the in-scope events, there were **4,705 items recorded with a repair outcome**. Of these, almost three-quarters (73%) could be repaired, with another 15% repairable, and just over 1 in 10 unable to be repaired.

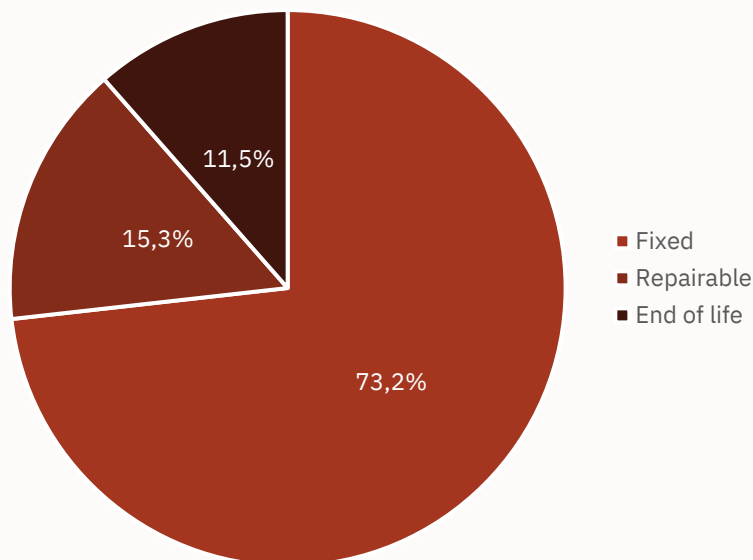


Figure 5 - Repair status of items seen at repair events, May-October 2023

The information about the type and weight of items fixed at repair cafés are used to calculate the environmental impact of events. In total, for May to October 2023, the combined impact of the repair café events recorded in the RCANZ network and included in this analysis were:



8,938 kg
Of waste prevented



52,906 kg
Of CO₂ diverted

Restarters have conducted substantial research into the carbon footprints of common products at repair events as a basis for these calculations. Calculations were performed of the average weight and the average amount of CO₂e produced to manufacture and transport different types of items - i.e. the impact of the item before it's ever used. For each successful repair, this assumes that the useful life of an item was extended by 50%. To improve the calculations for unpowered or miscellaneous items, entering an estimate of the weight of the item is an option offered on Restarters.

For more information about how these numbers are estimated, see:
[How do we measure the environmental impact of event?](#)

What types of items were fixed at repair events?

The Restarters data collection distinguishes between items that are ‘Powered’ and ‘Unpowered’. Most items presented at repair events (64%) were unpowered, including clothing, hand tools, furniture and jewellery. Overall, 86% of these items were fixed at the repair event. For powered items, overall, 50% were fixed at the event.

Item type	Total items	% of Total	No. Fixed	% Fixed
Unpowered	3,020	64%	2,595	86%
Powered	1,685	36%	850	50%
Total	4,705	100%	3,445	73%

Table 2 - Items seen and repair outcome, May October 2023

The figures in Figure 6 show more detailed information for the 16 most common item categories presented at repair events. The most commonly seen, and one of the most commonly fixed, items at repair cafés were clothing and textiles (28% of items, 92% fixed). There were also many hand tools (9%), and these had a high rate of repair as well (93% fixed).

For powered items, the most common were small kitchen items (general) (5% of all items), with kettles and toasters (each 2% of all items) identified separately also in the top 15 items. The repair rates for these small household items were much lower than for unpowered items, at 45% for small kitchen items, 46% for kettles and only 33% of toasters fixed at the repair event.

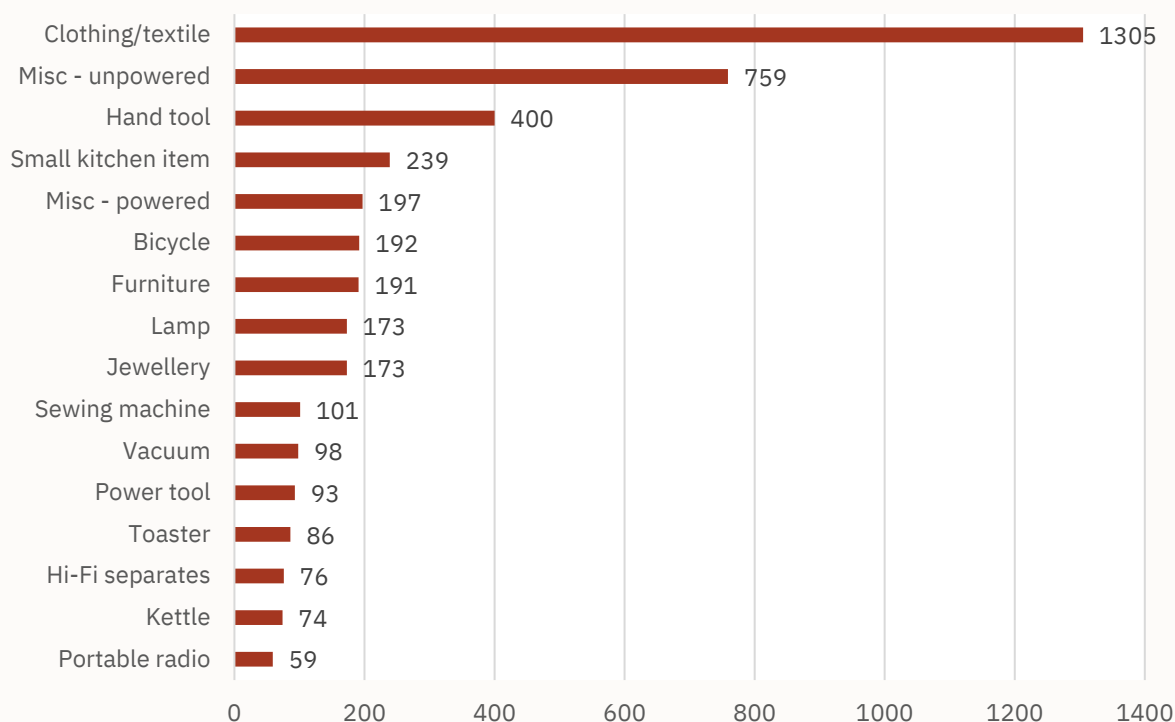


Figure 6 - Number of items seen by category, May-October 2023

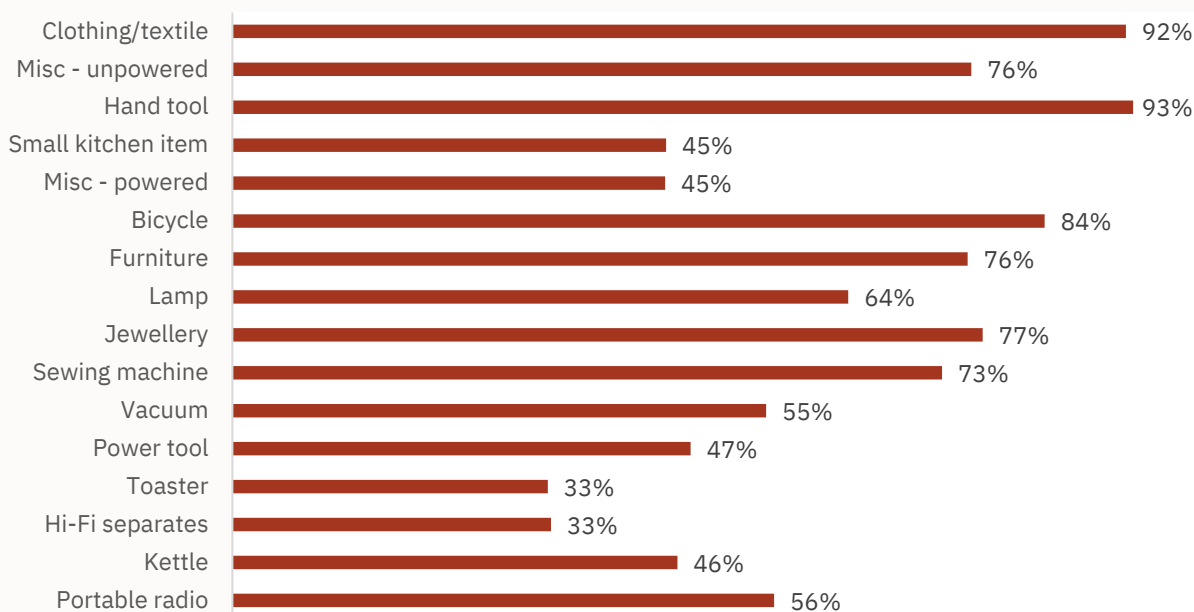


Figure 7 - Percentage of items fixed by category, May-October 2023

Note on data

The data for this report was extracted on 10 December 2023. RCANZ and the Repair Café groups will continue to work on and improve the data entry on Restarters, so the data collected is as complete and accurate as possible.

Data for repair café volunteers, volunteer shifts and repair event visitors is also collected on Restarters, however, the focus for this analysis was on reviewing the data on repair café groups, repair events and items presented, repaired, fixable or end of life. There are gaps in the information about volunteers and visitors recorded for the reported period, and RCANZ will look at improving these in 2024.

Similarly, Restarters collects data on the brand of items, although this level of detail is not always available, and has not been included in this analysis. In the future, RCANZ will look at increasing repair data collection and analysis of this valuable information.

We have included information on calculations of waste prevented and CO2 diverted, based on the weight of items repaired at repair cafés. Restarters include research-based default weights for many items, though the level of detail for unpowered items (in particular) means that the quality of this information is variable. From our analysis, it can be concluded that, while there are limitations, the data collated was of sufficient value to be included in this report. RCANZ will continue to improve the quality of this data, both through the data collected by repair cafés in the RCANZ network, and through the background systems in Restarters.

Conclusion

Being able to utilize the Restarters repair data platform to bring together data from the many cafés associated with RCANZ has been very valuable in showing our collective impact as a network, with 3,445 of items repaired at 160 fully recorded repair events in the six months of May to October 2023.

While demonstrating the successes of repair cafés, this data also reveals some of the challenges, with some types of items proven to be very difficult to repair by product design, or requiring more time to be repaired, e.g. accessing spare parts. Repair cafés can direct people to professional services where required and available, however, there are overall challenges in a largely linear economy focussed on purchase and disposal rather than repair.

There are many more stories to be discovered within the Restarters data collected for this report, to understand more in depth about the successes and challenges. RCANZ will further explore the information collected and work with repair cafés to continue building and enriching this valuable repair data resource. Repair Café Aotearoa NZ thanks all participating repair cafés for their efforts in supporting this project.