



## **Circular Economy Huon**

**Premiers Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council**

**Round 2 Submission**

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*A circular economy is based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems. Ellen Macarthur Foundation*

## 1. Circular Economy Huon

First incorporated as Circular Economy Cygnet in 2017, the group expanded to become Circular Economy Huon (CEH) in 2018. We are a community group that meets monthly to focus on projects and programs to lower greenhouse gas emissions and improve the use of resources for a more sustainable and fairer future. We collaborate and work in partnerships with all sectors of the community to bring about better solutions. CEH has held three forums to look at climate change action in the Huon Valley, made submissions to local and state government and is in the process of investigating how transport can be improved.

## 2. Overview

The Huon has a low level of self-sufficiency and the economy, a low level of circularity. Economically the Valley is dependent on exporting primary production together with some tourism and has to import most other goods and services. It means that resources (and emissions) are expended to transport goods and services in and out of the area. Also, there is a low level of reuse and recycling as the source of production for many goods is distant from consumption in the municipality.

In this submission CEH as a Huon organisation is making recommendations primarily for this region but expects that many projects are applicable to other areas of the State. There are many projects that with funding support can contribute to the wellbeing of the community, reduce emissions, make the economy more circular and boost employment.

Circular Economy Huon has referred to several useful reports in the preparation of this submission:-

1. LGAT proposals for the development of a Circular Economy Plan. We look forward to actively participating in its implementation.
2. Beyond Zero Emissions proposals in "The Million Jobs Plan". This plan links employment opportunities to renewable energy, retrofitting buildings, electric transport, clean manufacturing and mining, land regeneration and waste recycling.
3. Australian Unions report - 'Australia's Economic Reconstruction after Covid-19: A National Jobs Plan and Five Ways to Get Started'. The document deals with the importance of training and education. In considering the reconstruction of Tasmania maximizing employment opportunities are very important.
4. As a measure of progress we recommend the adoption of a Circularity Metric such as the described in the 'Circularity Gap Report'.

CEH, like most governments and economists do not think that life will just return to normal after Covid has disappeared or subsided. We believe that there will be change and it is important that this change is directed to meet the challenges of climate change and to make the best use of the world's resources. If this is properly planned, it can benefit all Tasmanians.

The recommended projects that follow will provide more employment in Tasmania.

### 3. Principles

Below are the principles being applied for the selection of reconstruction projects. Each of the projects will make a contribution to each of these principles.

1. Job creation
2. Improving circularity within regions and the state
3. Reducing carbon emissions
4. Improving health and wellbeing
5. Improving community resilience

### 4. Projects

#### 4.1 Going Local

Aim: To evaluate the 'import' of goods and services into the Huon Valley and assess where import replacement would be viable.

Components:

- Conduct a skills audit of people living in the Huon Valley
- Review the positions being filled from people living outside the Huon Valley
- Improve education and training opportunities for residents to fill future skills/knowledge gaps
- Analyse the goods/produce being brought into the valley and assess import replacement opportunities
- Investigate options for clean manufacturing and further downstream processing of local products

#### 4.2 Transport

Aim: to develop a transport system that reduces emissions and congestion while improving mobility in regional areas of Tasmania

Components:

- Improve the uptake of public transport along trunk routes
- Facilitate the introduction of a car share and ride share
- Encourage the Covid trend of working from home and look for ways to assist
- Take measures to improve the uptake of EVs
- Provide financial incentives for tourism operators to install EV chargers
- Encourage car hire operators to make EVs available
- Trial on demand community transport projects in regional areas as a connector to public transport
- Electric water transport – ferries, passenger vehicles, pleasure craft

## 4.3 Organic Waste

Aim: To reduce methane release and add value to aquaculture, agriculture, silviculture and municipal green and FOGO bi-products in the Huon Valley region by producing composted fertilizer.

Components:

- Form an inclusive group with broad representation from aquaculture, fisheries, horticulture, agriculture, forestry, TIA/UTAS, local government[s], state and federal government and the community sector to investigate and plan for a collective
- Prepare a feasibility study including bi-product flows, land and building requirements, machinery and equipment, transport, and resulting products and potential markets
- Source funding and implement

## 4.4 Energy Efficiency

Aim: To make the best possible use of energy in the residential, business and government sectors in order to save money, increase comfort levels, and reduce wastage for a whole of community benefit.

Components: This topic has two strands to bring direct physical energy efficiency and to apply energy efficiency measures more broadly in the future.

- Physical energy efficiency
  - Improve thermal efficiency in social housing by draft proofing, insulating walls, under floors and ceilings
  - Heaters? Double glazing? Appliances?
  - Investigate and then promote schemes for improving the energy efficiency of privately owned rental properties
  - Devise and promote schemes for providing solar hot water and photovoltaic panels to households that can be paid for overtime with savings from their installation
- Draft legislation and regulations:
  - Raise the minimum energy efficiency star rating permissible for all new dwellings from 6 to 7.5
  - Require all rental properties to have a star rating and a statement about the approximate cost of heating and cooling annually
  - Require all new commercial properties where people are to be accommodated (eg hotels, B&Bs, guest houses) to have a star rating level at the same level as for dwellings
  - All dwellings to be sold in Tasmania to have a star rating level prior to being put on the market.

## **4.5 Social housing**

Aim: to improve the quality of housing and build community cohesion through building Circular Economy Villages

Components:

- Work with the Resource Management and Planning System to identify and approve places where integrated housing development can occur
- Engage with local families and especially young people to participate in building the houses and other facilities, using local materials wherever possible.
- Investigate the potential for Circular Economy Villages close to regional settlements to increase community resilience and self-sufficiency
- Increase resilience by connecting new dwellings to community energy grids and through biomass heating using “waste” from sawmills, orchards etc.

## **4.6 Land management**

Aim: To maintain land productivity and provide as much food locally as possible while ensuring that development is fair, orderly and sustainable

Components:

- Maintain productive agricultural and horticultural land close to settlements by preventing urban sprawl
- Protect settlements from fire risk wherever possible by planting belts of deciduous trees around townships.
- Maintain and improve waterways by ensuring that riparian reserves are protected and that run-off of nutrients from agriculture is minimised.
- Prevent contamination of waterways by agricultural chemicals, especially herbicides.
- Ensure that all development complies with Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles to minimise environmental impacts of settlements.
- Minimise land clearing and use of fossil fuels to reduce GHG emissions and promote production of kelp-based supplements to minimise methane production by cattle.

## **4.7 Tourism**

Aim: To develop an industry not adversely affected by boom/bust cycles by becoming more reliant on intra and interstate visitors than international visitors.

Components:

- Review all industry marketing strategies and revise to encourage greater domestic visitation
- Evaluate which tourism businesses that would prosper from more domestic visitors and provide support for these businesses to thrive
- Introduce a sustainability scheme such as EarthCheck that will be followed by all tourism businesses

- Establish a local carbon offset scheme for visitors to contribute to who make longer trips from their residence
- Develop activity based trails for a range of interlinking activities based on the natural advantages of a region eg biking, kayaking, sailing, walking, horse-riding etc..

## **4.8 Regenerative land practices**

Aim: To provide information, skills and the requisite incentives to accelerate the adoption of regenerative practices for all types of small, medium and large scale landholdings.

Components:

- Establish a range of demonstration regenerative properties.
- Provide instructional sessions for new and existing landholders.
- Develop a Tasmanian regenerative land practices centre of excellence for students, farmers, and other local, national and international groups.
- Monitor, research and record the environmental and economic benefits derived from adopting regenerative land practices.
- Communicate and market the benefits of regenerative land practices to banks/sources of capital, the business community, government agencies and the general public.

## **4.9 Community resilience.**

Aim: Support community groups to connect and share information, resources and volunteers.

Components:

- Provide access to insurance for meetings and events
- Subsidise access to community halls and facilities.
- Facilitate a common access path for communication and IT platforms
- Develop an integrated 'one stop shop' State Government agency to support the development of community groups.
- Refurbish an existing community hall to provide good lighting, PA system, temperature control, retractable seating, plus electronic equipment with connectivity to facilitate meetings for residents.

## 5. References

1. Local Government Association Tasmania Tasmania's Recovery- A plan to recover, build resilience and reinvent.  
[https://www.lgat.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0029/718922/LGAT-Submission-PESRAC-.pdf](https://www.lgat.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0029/718922/LGAT-Submission-PESRAC-.pdf)
2. Beyond Zero Emissions. The Million Jobs Plan <https://bze.org.au/the-million-jobs-plan/>
3. Australian Unions – Australia's Economic Reconstruction after Covid-19: A National Jobs Plan, and Five Ways to Get Started.  
<https://action.australianunions.org.au/nerp>
4. The Circularity Gap Report – Norway. (2020)  
<https://www.circularity-gap.world/norway>