

Driving a Circular Economy in the Goulburn Murray

A circular economy is based on three principles:



What we've done so far

An investigation was undertaken into regional circular economy activity, barriers and opportunities. It then explored what is needed to drive the circular economy in the Goulburn Murray region.

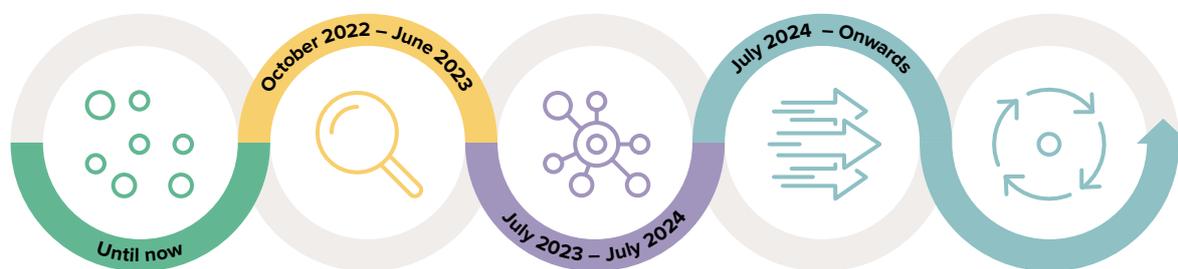
The investigation revealed large levels of activity at all scales and prompted many ideas to be explored.

The process of investigating enhanced connections between circular economy stakeholders. The Goulburn Murray regional community is well positioned for collaboratively and rapidly growing a circular economy, but resources are needed to drive it. The goodwill that has been built can soon be lost without action.

A working circular economy would increase the region's resilience as it confronts climate change, a growing population and resource shocks.

Key challenges to progressing a circular economy

- Moving from 'take, make, dispose' mindset to regenerative.
- Competing with cheaper 'linear' alternatives.
- Local companies competing with multi-nationals.
- Complex, dynamic policy environment and limiting regulations.
- Volume and/or scale to make it viable locally.
- Lack of regional leadership and coordination.
- Lack of knowledge, support, funding and investment.



Scattered action

Many individual personal, corporate and government efforts not connected.
Goulburn Murray circular economy project intent set.

Understand the current state

Desktop review of projects and initiatives.
Interviews with 35 stakeholders.
Workshop with 23 stakeholders.
Goulburn Murray circular economy project report.

Start coordinated action and form circular economy initiatives

Regional network integrates efforts.
Material (resource and waste) flows analysed.
Road map developed.

Improve and accelerate

Community involved.
Pilot projects underway.
Road map implementation underway.

Significant progress towards a circular economy

Evaluated projects.
Expanded projects.

The Right Idea



Western Composting Technology

Western Composting Technology is a Shepparton-based facility which uses kerbside green waste from four councils across the region to make high quality compost which it sells back to local large-scale garden supply companies.



RPM Pipes is a Kyabram family business which uses kerbside plastics such as milk and detergent bottles to produce industrial pipes. RPM Pipes is currently contracted to supply pipes for some of Victoria's biggest road projects.

The regional opportunities

Through necessity our region has become adept at collaboratively addressing natural resource sustainability challenges. The growth in regional circular economy activity is following a familiar trajectory. Many local enterprises have shovel-ready projects but are acting independently and would benefit from collaboration. Most projects are low-risk and obvious circular economy wins. The region is recognised across Australia and around the world as a significant food bowl. As a consequence, it generates enormous amounts of local waste. This presents a huge opportunity and is another resource and 'string to our bow' if harnessed effectively.

"The Goulburn Murray Resilience Taskforce is a good model to work with government to start those transitions and steps we need to take towards a circular economy."

Sarah Thomson, Goulburn Valley Water General Manager Strategy, Governance and Finance (CFO) and Goulburn Murray Resilience Taskforce Chair

"Our geography, diversity of industry, climate and water resources combine to give us an advantage that no other region can replicate."

Linda Nieuwenhuizen, Committee for Greater Shepparton CEO

Next steps

The critical next step is to secure resources to:

- Appoint a senior person within a well-connected organisation to oversee the next phase;
- Develop a supported circular economy network;
- Build community buy-in;
- Analyse material flows, the waste we produce and its potential uses;
- Identify and develop pilot and focus projects; and
- Develop a detailed circular economy road map.