

**Australian Government Productivity Commission: Opportunities in the Circular Economy**

Heightened awareness and adoption of circular principles throughout business and institutional value chains should be a key policy priority for the government of the day. At a time where our world requires the reduction in industrial processes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and also requires a disruption to existing economic models based around Gross Domestic Product growth. An economy based on extraction of finite resources cannot continue to chase growth.

Education and awareness should be prioritised to share knowledge across the population, and normalise concepts of using less, designing out waste, refusing to create demand for unnecessary items by not accepting free unwanted new items, interrogating the source of materials and making informed purchasing decisions to reduce a person’s individual environmental impact.

In direct reference to the areas the PC seeks input, I provide:

1. Circular economy success stories and measures of success.
  - There are many fantastic circular economy stories that have emerged, I will leave others to collate the exhaustive lists.
  - Great examples in the Hunter region of NSW.
    - Soul Hub (Newcastle) receives food donations from local suppliers that feature in meal offerings to guests in a “soup-kitchen-like” initiative. This enterprise serves thousands of meals per week to the vulnerable.
    - A new not for profit enterprise The Full Circle Collective enterprise has opened in October 2024, will serve as a ‘connection’ hub, marketplace for upcycled goods. This space has opportunity to create necessary local level connections that link people with used resources and realise a next purpose, avoiding landfill. The enterprise fosters community connections and ground-level interventions to realise and promote the potential of existing resources. Community events such as
    - Circular organic waste solutions offered by Feedback Organics and other providers such as xxx in the past have collected organic waste from hospitality businesses and created biological value in the form of compost, rather than all waste going to landfill.

In relation to the three areas posed below, I attach a simplified table below:

2. Priority opportunities to progress the circular economy
3. What is needed to enable further progress? What hurdles and barriers exist?
4. What action should government take? Role in the circular economy.

Priority Opportunity	How to enable progress? What Barriers exist?	Actions Government can take?
Organic Waste diversion from landfill to nutrient cycling and soil rejuvenation solutions.  Context: Methane production from food, garden and textile waste accounts for	Hospitality venues and those working in the industry report challenging business conditions with ever dwindling margins, inability to implement new waste protocols with a rising price tag or increasing labour costs to business. Costs to business to implement new operational work protocols rising costs in waste	Provide economic incentives for business to reassess their business practices, to see measurable changes in organic waste headed to landfill.  Support a series of short pilot programs, where businesses have waste costs reimbursed by government as the business partakes in waste assessments and development of bespoke, effective

<p>3.1 million tonnes of CO2-e generated each year from landfills in NSW, accounting for 56% of landfill waste emissions.</p> <p><a href="#">The National Food Waste Feasibility</a> study identifies that the cost of food waste to the Australian economy is \$36.6 billion a year.</p> <p>NSW produces 1.7 million tonnes of food waste per year with the hospitality, retail and institution sectors sending the most food waste to landfill. Source: NSW EPA.</p>	<p>management, additional labour costs to manage waste.</p> <p>Waste processors report volume licensing constraints, and low uptake of secondary organic</p> <p>Some waste processors do not respond to questions posed about organic waste processing capacity or interest.</p> <p>Some organic waste recyclers report inability to process waste volumes.</p>	<p>source-separation and waste logistics optimised to reduce handling time and costs to business.</p> <p>Investigate hospitality hub waste infrastructure (machine processing of organic waste), co-located with local energy hubs to receive and process organic waste. Sites would need to be identified and new employment emerges to manage hub infrastructure which has economic and environmental benefits.</p> <p>Link hospitality hub with offshoot agricultural enterprise receivers, to improve soil quality, water retention and productivity gains from increasing nutrient cycling. Cognisance and manage for potential chemical and biological contaminants (microplastics, foreign plant matter).</p> <p>Enable carbon farming to emerge rapidly with targeted education, dedicated carbon business development officers and funded community level sustainability coordinators who wear multiple sustainability opportunity hats.</p>
<p>Textile waste reduction, repurposing and recycling</p>	<p>Few viable business models exist that collect used textiles and on-sell for profit.</p> <p>To reduce textile waste going to landfill, influence product stewardship from producer and retailer.</p> <p>Insist on being the point of collection as well as point of sale for used items, or support hub solutions with commercial offtake models.</p> <p>Avenues to divert from landfill must be as simple as it is to throw an item away in the garbage.</p>	<p>Support and incentivise the scaleup of successful technologies and business models that address waste textile processing and repurposing ie <a href="http://www.blocktexp.com">www.blocktexp.com</a>.</p> <p>Assist in the support and fast track of new market opportunities to on-sell recycled/repurposed new products.</p> <p>Investigate the enablers for supporting new markets to emerge.</p>
<p>Introduce and enforce product stewardship schemes as a matter of priority.</p>	<p>Support and enforce information availability to enable the fixing and spare parts replacement of consumer products.</p> <p>Incentivise producers to create conditions for repair and “in-use” service models, to reduce inclination for new unit sales rather than repair and ongoing servicing.</p>	<p>For example GHD (heated hair instruments) and Garmin (digital GPS watches) have effective reconditioned products’ access.</p> <p>How to normalise and incentivise purchasing second hand and reconditioned goods to keep products in use for longer, and avoid new unit costs, for those not fussed and prefer the financial savings.</p>

		<p>Can commercial retailers be encouraged to provide electronic repairs in-store at the point of buying new consumer electronics, with access to parts and skills to fix with little delays.</p>
<p>A transition to low carbon and circular economies requires supported transition at the people, organisation and structural level.          Prioritise activation of localised networks, skills and expertise, close to problem/challenges and people required to activate and deliver the change. Spread wealth or ensure equity in this transition to the businesses required to transition, not large consultancies who benefit financially from transition strategy but are deficient in community-level implementation.</p>	<p>There is a clear layering of on-ground change-making people and institutional policy makers and program design, analysis and funding.          There is a need to find the intermediary translators in each community that can bring ideas to life by engagement and connection with community, other networked/co-ordinated service providers and broader communication of the benefits of change and support for transition.</p>	<p>Provide stimulus for community level projects with local skills and expertise to emerge with new fund for viable projects with impact.</p> <p>Provide funding programs to fund independent microbusiness consultants (often ex-government, ex-consultancy specialists) to attend major knowledge-sharing and networked industry events where many relationships and project intersection opportunities can occur.</p> <p>The recent Global Nature Positive Summit and NSW Circular Economy Summit are seemingly out of reach for an independent new business, headed up by a female with more than 20 years in government natural resource management and major program and project delivery. There are few avenues to apply to gain sponsored access or discounted tickets, so microbusiness can join the conversation.</p> <p>A developing offshore wind industry off the coast of Australia seeks skills and expertise to develop capacity and capability across the project development and delivery life cycle. An Offshore Wind Australia Conference 21 November has a \$2150 ticket price. This conference is therefore likely out of reach of many individual service providers and represents a missed opportunity for multiple microbusinesses to join forces and provide an alternative to very large consultancies. Local input to local projects can ensure circular principles are embedded in project planning and delivery strategies.</p> <p>I applaud a recent Adapt NSW Forum 2024 who offered heavily discounted tickets for small community &amp; Not For Profit admission ticket, which placed a small number of small businesses alongside hundreds of NSW government policy makers who benefited from hearing from/having interaction from industry and small business community on what interventions would work and how to deliver for impact.</p>

<p>Public Education campaigns that link exponential resource extraction, production and consumption with climate change and the world reaching global rising temperature and ecosystem tipping points.</p>	<p>Denialism, mistruths and fear are shameful parts of Australian political system. Media snippets and clever phrasing unfortunately appears more effective and cuts deeper than fact and basic education in some parts of Australia.</p> <p>The communication of evidence-based facts, and inviting the population to engage with credible information sources to influence purchasing decisions, voter preferencing and to decipher truth from fear and ulterior motives is important for multiple issues capturing Australian electorates.</p>	<p>Invest in public education campaigns to drive home the importance of “using less” rather than a consumption-focused society.</p> <p>Illustrate with imagery the consequences of markets (people) creating ongoing demand for virgin resources, and motivate alternative purchasing (or non-purchasing) choices eg. Christmas time toys swapping, or experience- based gifts.</p> <p>Invest in public education campaigns with a design that educates the population to be able to critically question and discern when a political opposition is clearly opposing or obstructing effective policy for the sake of opposition rather than fulling a fiduciary responsibility to prevent irreversible environmental degradation.</p> <p>Fund research and communication activities to explore what it would take to shift away from a growth economy. Devise policy and programs to stimulate growth in new prospects to replace the GDP \$ value to keep coal in the ground and to contain current resource extractions (currently estimated at 2-3 planets worth). (\$55B NSW coal exports, \$122B Australian coal exports in 22-23)</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I can be available to discuss any aspect of my submission.

Kind Regards

Kellie Pati



Good Natured **ESG**

**Kellie Pati**  
 Director - Good Natured ESG Pty. Ltd.  
 ABN: 74 676 159 845  
 A: 61-63 Parry Street, Newcastle West NSW 2302

**Focused project management and solutions in matters of Environment, Social impact and Governance (ESG) settings.**