Local Circular Case Studies

Some examples of circularity in action in the Bega Valley

May 2025

Image Credit: David Rogers Photography | Carp Street in Bega.

‘We’ve been on a journey towards circularity for a number of years now and, although we know we have a long way to go, our involvement in the Bega Circular Valley program is a great way for us to experiment with what works (and, just as importantly, what doesn’t) before looking to scale it up across the Bega Group as part of our long-term commitment to becoming more circular.’

Rob Grima, Executive General Manager Operational Excellence Bega Group

Image: Cattle grazing on a dairy farm in the Bega Valley

CASE STUDY: BEGA GROUP (Bega Valley and National)

Focus: An ongoing journey towards circularity.

Background: Bega Group is one of the founding members of the Regional Circularity Co-operative and has been closely involved with the Bega Circular Valley program since it was launched in 2021. In early 2023 they re-affirmed their long-term commitment to the program by providing $5 million in funding and donating land for the National Circularity Centre.

Circular innovation: Circularity has gradually increased in importance over the last four years for the Bega Group and is now one of the three pillars of their 2030 ‘Greater Good’ sustainability strategy. Within the circularity pillar of this strategy is a commitment to improve resource efficiency and reduce emissions.

This focus has led to a range of tangible circularity focused initiatives being implemented across their operations nationally, with some of those that have been brought in at their manufacturing sites in the Bega Valley, for example, including participation in a heat recovery project to optimise energy efficiency onsite, and waste-water irrigation on Bega land and neighbouring dairy farms.

Another example is the upgrade of the boiler used to generate steam in site-wide manufacturing processes to run on wood waste biomass sourced from a local sawmill rather than gas – an initiative that has led to a substantial reduction in gas usage and is a great example of reusing a waste stream.

Impact and future development: Looking ahead, they will continue to explore the substantial opportunities that exist in becoming more circular across the organisation, with short-term projects planned including a logistics optimisation project to improve the overall efficiency of their transport network and exploring the potential to build a 2.6MW solar farm with battery storage next to the Ridge Street manufacturing site in Bega to continue their shift towards more renewable sources of energy.

For more information: www.begagroup.com.au/sustainability/circularity/.

'Bega Valley Shire Council has taken its first steps toward transitioning to a circular economy by identifying opportunities in the following areas: waste management, water services and renewable energy.

Looking ahead, there will be opportunities for many of Council's operations to support and benefit from a more circular approach.'

Anthony McMahon, CEO.

Image Credit: Michal Fiedler | Tura Beach Library with solar panels.

CASE STUDY: BEGA VALLEY SHIRE COUNCIL (Bega Valley)

Focus: Unlocking the benefits that circularity can bring to our community.

Background: Bega Valley Shire Council has been involved with the Regional Circularity Co-operative since 2021. Council has been embracing circular practice for many years, including water recycling, wastewater biosolid reclamation and land application, food and garden organics collection and processing, and renewable energy projects.

Circular innovation: Council's recent efforts have primarily concentrated on waste management. To achieve the national waste reduction targets, which aim to divert 80% of waste from landfill by 2030, it is necessary to recover a significant portion of what is currently considered waste. This means more recycling, greater reuse of materials and responsible consumer choices. Bega Valley Shire was one of the first local government areas in NSW to adopt FOGO and Council has continued to provide leadership and guidance in this space.

Council has a net zero program and acknowledges community interest and concern in mitigating impacts from climate change by reducing its emissions. Council recognises the strong synergies and shared focus between net zero and circularity principles.

Council has ongoing grant programs supporting community-led circularity initiatives such as the Bega Valley Repair Café.

Impact and future development: Council has commenced a high-level circularity audit and opportunities assessment to clarify how its current operations support a circular economy and identify other circular economy opportunities within the organisation. When this work is complete, Council will have a clearer picture of its role in the circular economy, and how it might be able to collaborate with neighbouring councils to grow the broader regional circular economy, including through the Canberra Region Joint Organisation of Councils.

For more information: www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/council/plans-and-strategies.

'At Bega Valley Eggs, circularity means farming in a way that gives back more than it takes. By rotating our hens across fresh pasture, we're not only producing the best eggs but also regenerating the land, building soil health, and strengthening local food systems. It's about creating a cycle of abundance—where healthy soil, happy hens, and a thriving community all go hand in hand.'

Tom and Joscelin McMillan, Owners of Bega Valley Eggs

Image Credit: Bega Valley Eggs | Tom McMillan standing in front of their mobile regenerative chicken farm

CASE STUDY: BEGA VALLEY EGGS (Bemboka)

Focus: Regenerative farming through an innovative business model.

Background: Husband and wife duo, Tom and Joscelin McMillan are the proud owners of Bega Valley Eggs, a regenerative enterprise with 11,000-layer hens located in the rolling hills of Kameruka. After taking on the business in 2019, Tom and Joscelin have dedicated their farming operation to challenging the industrial food model and using sustainable practices to ensure the highest quality eggs that are truly pasture-raised and free range.

Circular innovation: Bega Valley Eggs employ holistic management as a pillar of their business model. Hens are raised on a stocking density of no more than 165 per hectare, compared to the industry free-range standards of 10,000 per hectare. The portable chook houses are rotated through the pasture each week, spreading nutrient rich manure evenly across the land for regeneration as the chooks roam and forage.

Impact and future development: As a result of taking a regenerative approach to farming and egg production, Bega Valley Eggs contribute to cycling invaluable and organic soil nutrients, enhancing the quality and quantity of soil in the environment. Operating via paddock to plate, Bega Valley Eggs are committed to supplying local and small-scale food systems, reducing food miles and building community resilience.

For more information: www.begavalleyeggs.com.au.

CASE STUDY: BEND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION (Bega)

Focus: Bend is designed for social and ecological harmony and sustainability based on the Permaculture principles of Earth Care, People Care, Fair Share.

Background: Bend Neighbourhood is situated within Djiringanj Country, on 13 hectares of land on the edge of the Bega township with currently 25 households consisting of a mix of owner occupiers, private tenants and social housing tenants. Since 2008, all houses have been built with sustainable design and materials, and the community has continued to make decisions together.

Circular innovation: Houses are built with different materials, including recycled materials, with passive solar design for renewable energy capture, composting toilets, rainwater tanks and connection to the community’s greywater system. Communal areas include a shared gathering area with kitchen, laundry, bathroom and guest accommodation, and a shared work shed.

Residents of the Bend Neighbourhood Association work together in focus groups. The Land Focus Group cares for Bend’s agricultural and conservation land; the Built Environment Focus Group looks after buildings and other infrastructure; the Social Focus Group supports the decision-making processes, social and educational events and helps with the smooth running of the Neighbourhood and the Neighbourhood House.

Impact and future development: Residents of Bend appreciate the sense of community spirit and positive environmental contribution they make. Bend continues to grow, with four homes yet to be built, which will create yet more sustainable housing in the Bega Valley. They are also currently exploring how best to share their experience – including the successes and failures – with town planners, architects, builders, landscape designers, community groups and other regional organisations, as well as how they might collaborate with universities looking to study the effectiveness of their circular model.

For more information: www.bend.org.au.

'We aspire to building an eco-system rather than an economy. We are not interested in monetary profit but instead on building sustainable access to resource, caring for people & environment, and growing the connective tissue of social connections and community.'

Robyn Martin, Co-Founder of Candelo Go

Image Credit: Candelo Go | Robyn Martin and Honda Jazz share vehicle and now a electric Honda Kona

CASE STUDY: CANDELO GO (Candelo)

Focus: Community Resource Sharing through a Car Share System.

Background: Established in 2018 by a small group of Candelo locals, Robyn Martin, Pete Wild, Rae Kennedy and David Ross Macdonald, Candelo Go is a not-for-profit association, run by volunteers, dedicated to making resources available to community through resource sharing.

Their first initiative, a car share system, has been a success and with the vision to share all sorts of resources, the Candelo community will minimise their small but mighty collective impact across transport emissions and pollution.

Circular innovation: Candelo Go host two share cars, a petrol Honda Jazz and a fully electric Honda Kona. In a regional community where there are few public transport options to travel around the Bega Valley Shire, the car share system has proved valuable to the community in times of need as a replacement car, or for supporting single car households. Through a small annual membership fee, bookings can be made online, where the money goes towards vehicle maintenance and registration.

Impact and future development: Not only does this practice provide better access to community resources but stimulates opportunities for social interaction to live well. Candelo Go have built up to over 45 members, generating greater community connection which has led to the development of other resource sharing initiatives including finance management software, with hopes to expand to trailers and other tools, or food sharing projects.

They are also branching into knowledge sharing through informative low waste living workshops covering how to preserve food, create natural and chemical free cleaning products, grow oyster mushrooms from coffee waste and make composting systems.

For more information: www.candelogo.org.

‘Circularity is where we are trying to focus rather than sustainability. Being “sustainable” describes a target which, in reality, is hard for a small business to reach. Circularity is a concept that can be applied across many parts of the business and can make a tangible difference – but it requires partnerships which take time to nurture.’

Richard Northam, Co-founder of Frogs Hollow Brewing Co.

Image Credit: Frogs Hollow Brewing Co. | Mitch Piercey & Richard Northam in the Frogs Hollow Brewery.

CASE STUDY: FROGS HOLLOW BREWING CO. (Wolumla)

Focus: Using circularity to drive tangible & realistic sustainability improvements.

Background: Co-founded by Richard Northam and Mitchell Piercey, the Frogs Hollow Brewing Company is an independent 500 litre microbrewery on New South Wales's Sapphire Coast. Operating fully off-grid, and with a finite, rather than infinite, growth business model, their aim is to operate as sustainably as possible within the real-world constraints that they have.

Circular innovation: Focused on making multiple areas of their manufacturing and distribution operations more circular, ranging from only using renewable energy generated on site, to transitioning away from the use of caustic cleaning products to a biodegradable enzymatic cleaner (Enzybrew 10).

All water use is harvested rainwater (310,000 litres of water storage to support the brewery operations), with significant efforts made to optimise water usage – typically between 1.5 and 3 litres of wastewater is created per litre of beer (depending on the type of beer) vs. an industry standard of 5 to 6 litres.

Other by-products from the brewing process such as spent grain goes to feed a local farmers livestock. Used hops and yeast help to enhance on site composting efforts as part of regenerating land previously used for intensive farming.

Impact and future development: Frogs Hollow understand they are on a journey, and, despite the impact their various initiatives have already had on making their business both more sustainable and competitive, know they will constantly be looking for and making changes to become ever more circular.

One of those changes is their current roll out of a Paktech re-use scheme, with wheelie bins distributed around the local area where consumers can return their Paktech can holders, diverting them from the recycling stream or landfill. A Paktech holder can typically be reused up to 50 times.

For more information: www.frogshollowbrewingco.com.au.

CASE STUDY: GOOD REUSABLES (Bermagui)

Focus: Closing the loop on single-use coffee cups.

Background: Cafés in Bermagui have joined forces to take a bold step towards eliminating single-use coffee cups by adopting the Good Reusables system. Good Reusables, a NSW based social enterprise, is dedicated to replacing single-use packaging in the hospitality industry with practical, scalable reuse solutions.

Circular innovation: Through a deposit-return system, customers at participating cafes receive a food-grade. BPA-free, low carbon polypropylene cup with their coffee, which they can either reuse or return at any participating café Australia wide. Locally, returns are conveniently accepted across Bermagui, Cobargo, Narooma, Pambula and Eden cafes. Each Good Reusables cup can be used up to 1,000 times before being returned to the Australian manufacturer for shredding and recycling – ensuring a truly circular system.

Impact and future development: Bermagui is the first town in Australia where cafés have collectively phased out single-use coffee cups. This initiative is expected to prevent 200,000 disposable cups from ending up in landfill every year while keeping local waterways free from waste. By using Bermagui as a model, Good Reusables has gathered the logistical data and processes needed to scale the system nationally – helping more communities make the shift away from single-use.

For more information: www.goodcup.au.

Image Credit: Green Queen | Krystina Kasprzak in the Green Queen store in Bega

CASE STUDY: GREEN QUEEN (Bega)

Focus: An environmentally conscious approach to overconsumption within the clothing industry.

Background: Established in 2019, Green Queen provides Bega Valley residents and visitors with the opportunity to shop sustainably and locally. By offering a curated selection of quality pre-loved pieces, the local community can engage in and contribute to the development of a circular fashion economy within the Bega Valley. In 2023, Green Queen was awarded Excellence in Innovation and Sustainability by the Bega Valley Business Group, highlighting their ongoing commitment to sustainability and positive environmental impact.

Circular innovation: Green Queen specialises in high-quality, natural fibres (wool/cotton/silk/linen). These materials are biodegradable and have a significantly lower environmental impact compared to synthetic alternatives. Green Queen is disrupting the traditional “take, make, waste” model of the fashion industry. The business operates by sourcing clothing items locally from individuals on a consignment basis/ model. By promoting the reuse and recycling of garments, Green Queen reduces the environmental impact of fast fashion while providing an accessible sustainable option for the local community.

Impact and future development: In a world dominated by fast fashion, purchasing second-hand clothing made from high-quality natural fibres helps reduce carbon emissions, waste to landfill, and the water and energy consumption associated with garment production. As Green Queen continues to grow, their goal is to expand their offerings, further promote sustainability within the community, and inspire others to adopt the circular economy model.

For more information: www.facebook.com/greenqueenbega.

'Circularity is at the heart of everything we do at Grow the Future. Through working with young people to grow food and regenerate the land, we are actively working to build local sustainability and resilience. At the same time, we are creating a platform from which young people can play a leading role in our valley's transition towards a circular economy.'

Callum Champagne, Grow The Future Founder

CASE STUDY: GROW THE FUTURE (Bega)

Focus: Inspiring local youth in food production and land regeneration.

Background: Grow the Future is a social enterprise offering hands-on training, engagement and employment opportunities to local youth to develop their interest, skill and understanding of food production and local food systems.

Circular innovation: Through school-based programs and certified training certificates, Grow the Future build the skills and experience of the next generation in horticulture, ecosystem management and business. The vocational training is hosted in their market garden, small animal space and native regeneration zones, where produce grown is sold through local businesses and a weekly produce market.

Impact and future development: Engaging youth in land management and the outdoors empowers young people to build their skills and social confidence to take into any future endeavours, as well as prioritising seasonal production and produce.

For more information: www.growthefuture.com.au.

Photo: North of Eden - Handpicking the best botanicals for the next batch of North of Eden gin

'For us, circularity is a bit like that old adage, 'One person's trash is another person's treasure.' It's about being conscious and mindful consumers, but it's also about making the most of finite resources including by thinking creatively about new and alternative uses for your 'waste' streams. Last, but not least, it's about keeping connected with your local community because even if you can't find a use for something, there's a good chance someone in your community already has!'

Karen Touchie and Gavin Hughes, Owners of North of Eden

CASE STUDY: NORTH OF EDEN (Stony Creek)

Focus: Creating world class spirits using sustainable craft production methods and locally grown ingredients.

Background: North of Eden Artisan Distillery was established in 2018 by converting an old farm shed into a distillery and cellar door using a mixture of upcycled and recycled materials. Its gins all feature locally grown and foraged ingredients, including waste oyster shells from local oyster farms and juniper grown less than 100kms from the distillery. It is the first distillery in the world to win an international gold medal for a gin made entirely on Australian grown juniper.

Circular innovation: North of Eden's botanicals are either grown at the distillery or foraged locally, where they were once considered waste but now re-used as ingredients in the distillation process, including oyster shells and fruit peels. Post distillation botanicals are fed to the distillery's resident highland cows, while broken up oyster shells to their chickens. The distillery uses a glass bottle which is 30% lighter than standard spirit bottles and is also fully recyclable. In terms of waste streams, waste cardboard is shredded to use as packaging material, wooden pallets re-used by local oyster farmers, and steel alcohol drums are given alternate uses via the local waste management facility. Water usage at the distillery is minimised through the use of a closed loop water system.

Impact and future development: Using locally grown and sourced ingredients, lighter weight packaging and the recycling and upcycling of waste, North of Eden contribute to a reduction in transport and waste emissions, all while producing products with a low food mile footprint. Energy needs are currently met from a mix of solar and LPG gas and the distillery is actively seeking a local biogas alternative to LPG for the future.

For more information: www.northofeden.com.au.

Image credit: @ocean2earth | Ocean2Earth natural soil improver, available nationally

'We see fish waste as a powerful resource. By transforming it, we're not only reducing waste and lowering our carbon footprint but also creating nutrient-rich soil to support the next generation of food crops. It's about turning a problem into a solution for a more sustainable future.'

Tim and Kyran Crane, Co-founders of Ocean2Earth

CASE STUDY: OCEAN2EARTH (Eden)

Focus: Turning marine waste into a high-value soil improver.

Background: Brothers Tim and Kyran Crane launched Ocean2Earth (O2E) Australia in 2019, with a key purpose to better manage marine organic waste in the local area. Working with councils, fisherman and seafood processors, marine waste is naturally composted into valuable marine based compost full of sea minerals for use in agriculture and horticulture, which would have otherwise been directed to landfill.

Circular innovation: O2E operate both a seafood waste collection service and composting facility in Merimbula, NSW where marine by-products are mixed with pine bark from a local pine plantation mill and a specialised inoculant to compost into a rich natural soil enhancer. Compost piles are pasteurised and aged for 6 months before been screened and milled into a fine powder for commercial or small-scale application by consumers on paddocks or home gardens.

Impact and future development: The Eden based start-up are diverting over 500 tonnes of waste from landfill each year. As they continue their war on waste, they have also partnered with OF packaging to support and re-use the soft plastic packaging, providing customers with a disposal option instead of sending the packaging to landfill.

For more information: www.ocean2earth.com.au.

'Now is the time to invest in circular waste-to-value solutions that future-proof your business.'

Lachlan Esplin, Sales & Marketing Director at RTG

Image Credit: RTG | Tony, Kari and Lachlan Esplin of RTG.

CASE STUDY: RECYCLING TECHNOLOGIES GROUP (Eden)

Focus: Upvaluing wood fibre waste into an alternative energy resource.

Background: Recycling Technologies Group (RTG) helps timber manufacturers and processors unlock the full value of their wood fibre waste. Based in Eden, NSW, RTG operates a state-of-the-art facility that transforms waste into high-value wood pellets and briquettes. With expertise in shredding, drying, briquetting, pelletising, and packaging, RTG provides Australian wood processors with the technology to create premium energy products for local and national distribution—turning waste into a profitable and sustainable resource.

Circular innovation: At RTG's Eden facility, every fibre of waste wood is repurposed through a value-adding process into clean energy products, including food-smoking pellets and wood heating fuel. This operation demonstrates how businesses can reduce waste, lower disposal costs, and create new revenue streams while contributing to a more sustainable timber industry. By adopting RTG's proven model, businesses can replicate this success, keeping valuable timber resources in circulation and strengthening the regional circular economy.

Impact and future development: RTG's Eden facility not only replaces fossil fuels with renewable wood energy but also drives economic growth and job creation in the Bega Valley. As RTG expands, the next phase of innovation is already underway – introducing carbonisation technology to transform wood pellets into high-value products for soil conditioning and steel manufacturing.

For more information: www.recyclingtechgroup.com.au.

‘This community is not the same since the fire, it’s better. In many respects, it’s brought some beautiful and wonderful things to this town. One of them is something like Renewable Cobargo happening.’

Dan Williamson, Manager of Cobargo Co-Op

Image Credit: David Rogers Photography | Cobargo High Street

CASE STUDY: RENEWABLE COBARGO (Cobargo)

Focus: Delivering Resilient Clean Energy to a Local Community.

Background: Renewable Cobargo is a community-based collective established after the Black Summer Bushfires in 2019/20.

Residents, business owners, farmers and others rallied together to commit to a renewable energy future, ensuring greater energy security and efficiency, and to accelerate the transition to renewables after experiencing prolonged grid failures during previous natural disasters.

Circular innovation: In the transition to 100% clean renewable energy, Renewable Cobargo have installed solar battery systems in four community buildings to create cool refuges during heatwaves and ensure business continuity for the Cobargo Rural Fire Brigade and local agricultural co-op.

They have also developed a plan for a community microgrid which would act as a large-scale solar battery system for the whole village, powering essential energy supply for water, internet, sewerage & petrol pumps during grid failures.

Impact and future development: As Renewable Cobargo progress their transition to clean, local energy they continue to reduce their Co2 emissions and the need for importing electricity and petroleum products, creating a resilient and self-reliant local community where the benefits remain local. .

For more information: www.renewablecobargo.com.

'A perfectly serviceable unit would have gone to landfill if not for the great work at Bega Valley Repair Café. A fantastic service.'

Bruce Williamson, Customer

Image Credit: Repair Café | Interior of Repair Café in Bega

CASE STUDY: BEGA VALLEY REPAIR CAFÉ (Bega)

Focus: Extending the life of household items and appliances through repair.

Background: A not-for-profit community initiative launched in Bega in 2019, where community volunteers offer a repair service on broken household items and appliances for Bega Valley residents.

Circular innovation: The Repair Café challenges 'normal' consumer driven behaviour in our current throw-away society by finding ways to extend the use of material goods, often through sourcing spare parts that are either hard-to-find or no-longer commercially available.

Volunteers have provided repair services to family heirloom sewing machines, new motor parts to Dyson vacuums and even corrected the upside-down display on a LG TV.

As well as finding ways to extend the lifecycle of products, they also provide opportunities for social connection where people can learn new skills in how to repair everyday products from other community members.

Impact and future development: Whilst regenerating social systems and helping shift consumer thinking, the Repair Café contributes to the diversion of waste from landfill and encourages a repair and re-use culture.

Successfully transitioning to a circular economy in the Bega Valley will mean services like the Repair Café expanding and significantly increasing their capacity, operation and community connections – and for the repair and reuse skills they possess to be both strengthened and passed on to the next generation.

For more information: www.facebook.com/BegaRepairCafe.

'The RfR applies circular economy principles to ensure that solar panels have the opportunity to pay back the environmental costs associated with mining, manufacture, transport and installation, before being broken down for industrial materials recovery.

This work introduces an integrity to the efforts of the solar industry which would otherwise be lacking.'

Stephen Cornthwaite, President & founding member of RfR

CASE STUDY: REPURPOSING FOR RESILIENCE (Moruya, Eurobodalla)

Focus: A shire wide grassroots approach to tackling solar waste.

Background: The community driven initiative Repurposing for Resilience (RfR) was formally established in 2022, as a solution to extending the life of solar panels to minimise the landfill burden associated with solar industry waste.

Solar panels and their associated components are often discarded as waste before their true end of life, but RfR volunteers see opportunity and benefit in placing additional value on these classified waste products.

Circular innovation: RfR combines electrical knowledge from local expertise and innovation to recycle reclaimed solar equipment. Solar panels and their components are segregated and tested before being re-certified for re-use, or, if not meeting industry standards, re-purposed into household items such as furniture, building cladding, agricultural products or art exhibitions.

Not only is their focus on solar waste but other initiatives such as bringing electrical trade training to the NSW South Coast, giving new life to old computers destined for e-waste, developing battery recycling solutions, and establishing soft plastics recycling facilities in their local area.

Impact and future development: Through these re-use and re-purposing efforts, RfR are putting a stop to panels entering landfill, reducing the costs for Council and constituents associated with disposal fees, creating new industry markets and providing a safe and cost-effective market for second hand solar products. By incorporating multiple industries along the supply chain, RfR are increasing workforce skills and job opportunities in electrical, renewables, construction, marketing and retail all within the local economy. Its local success can be seen as a solution for other regions of Australia in their battle against e-waste.

For more information: www.rfreurobodalla.com.au.

‘By focusing on sustainable farming practices and packaging, we contribute to the circular economy and strive for a more sustainable future.’

Kay Saarinen, Co-founder of Saarinen Organics

Image Credit: RTG | Tony, Kari and Lachlan Esplin of RTG.

CASE STUDY: SAARINEN ORGANICS (Wyndham)

Focus: Using circular business practices and regenerative farming to create organic skincare products.

Background: In 2008, husband and wife Gregg & Kay Saarinen launched their Eco Seed to Skin skincare business in Wyndham after years of following their passion for building an eco-sustainable lifestyle and income. Using an innovative approach combined with on-farm permaculture growing principles, their diverse range of products have won numerous sustainability awards and are certified organic.

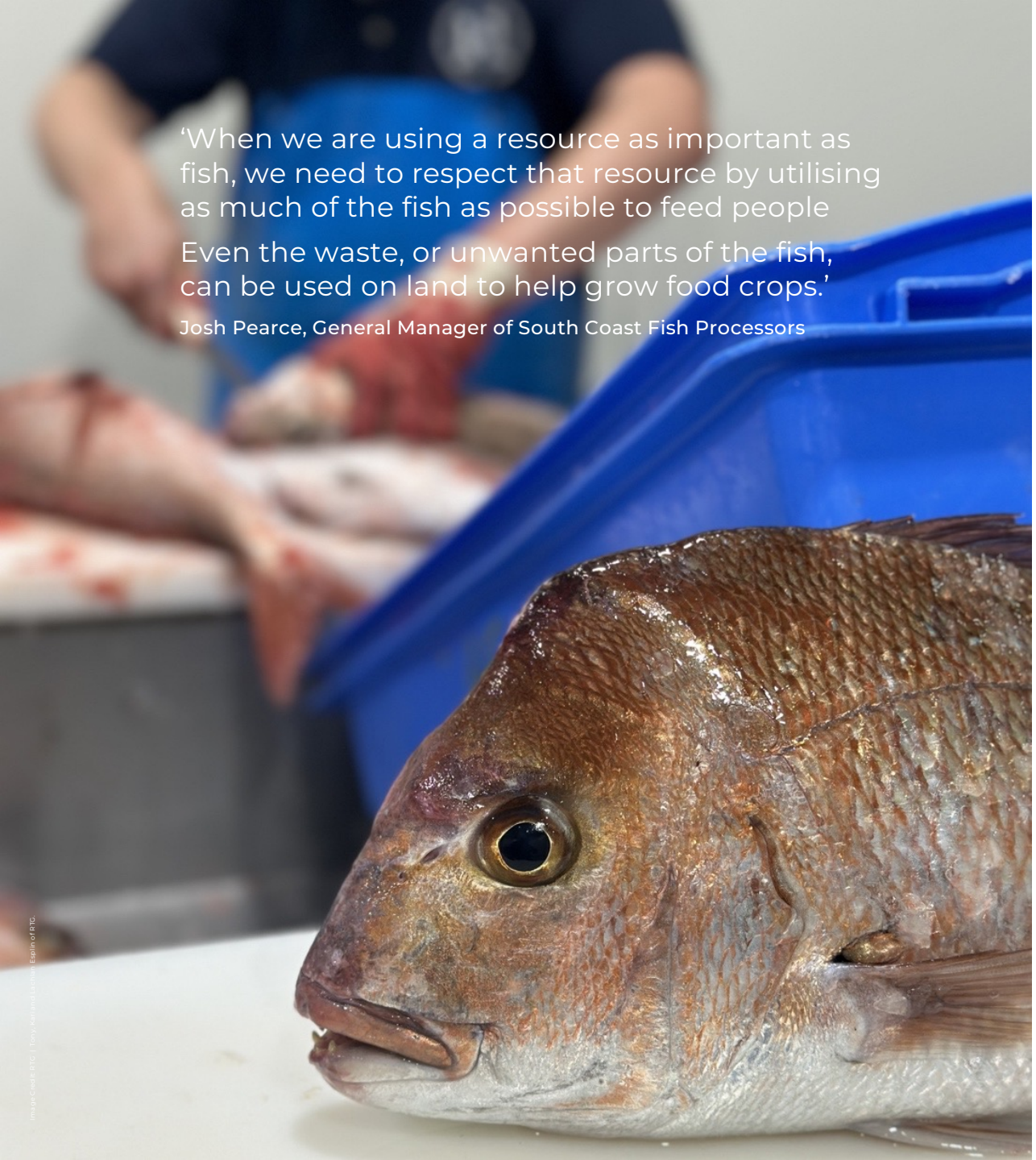
Circular innovation: Saarinen Organics grow their own organic herbs on-farm at home in Wyndham using regenerative farming methods including soil microbial health; growing herbs that do not need additional water other than what our climate provides, green manure crops and direct planting requiring no plastic pots.

Once harvested, the manufacturing of these ingredients into high quality skincare products is powered by a 100% standalone solar system. The manufacturing lab also has a hospital grade autoclave to enable circular packaging, where customers can return their packaging to be cleaned and refilled for their re-use.

Impact and future development: The operations and products produced at Saarinen Organics are made with a minimal carbon and ecological footprint where they can build their own carbon credits, thereby taking full responsibility for their impact on the environment.

Their circular journey is not over yet. Kay and Gregg hope to invest in laser printing on bamboo and aluminium packaging to further reduce plastic labels in the future and are planning to use ocean waste plastic for unavoidable packaging like pumps.

For more information: www.saarinenorganics.com.



CASE STUDY: SOUTH COAST FISH PROCESSORS (Eden)

Focus: Sustainably providing locally caught seafood to local communities.

Background: South Coast Fish (SCF), established in 2004, delivers sustainably caught seafood to residents and restaurants, and to interstate and overseas markets. They operate to support the local community and are strengthened by their network of fishers in the surrounding waters, so much so that their process of unloading, filleting and retailing fish all takes place within 500 metres of the factory floor at the Eden Marina. No organic material goes to waste in their business practices, with the majority going to local fertiliser company Ocean2Earth.

Circular innovation: SCF prioritise environmental responsibility alongside the provision of fresh premium quality seafood. They have invested in clean, solar-powered energy to run the factory, they have made the swap from the use of polystyrene boxes to transport fish to the more sustainable Chiltainer cardboard boxes, and their organic “waste” (such as fish heads and offal) is picked up by local business Ocean2Earth to be turned into a biodynamic fertiliser.

Impact and future development: In collaboration with the Regional Circularity Co-operative and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, as part of the Circularity for Fisheries and Aquaculture program, SCF undertook circularity measurement of their business in 2023 and 2024, using the Circular Transition Indicators (CtI) framework by World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

This process showed that SCF had a 23% increase in material circularity (such as packaging) from 2023 to 2024, and a material circularity 99.88% and 100% for biological materials (such as fish and offal) in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

For more information: www.southcoastfish.com.au.

Image Credit: `Triangle Tool Library | Members Monica Considine and Sean Wynn and interior of the Tool Shed.

Bega circular valley

Triangle Tool Library

CASE STUDY: TRIANGLE TOOL LIBRARY (Cobargo)

Focus: Reducing consumption of resource-intensive tools though social structures.

Background: The Triangle Tool Library formed as an idea after the 2019/20 Black Summer Bushfires to assist the residents of Cobargo in its rebuilding effort's. Established at the Cobargo Co-op by volunteer collaboration, the Tool Library has built up a collection of tools, which provide opportunities for individuals to carry out their own projects for workshops, to share skills and for education on how to use and maintain equipment. The Library provides an environment where people can connect and contributes to a stronger community.

Circular innovation: The Triangle Tool Library operates a library where, instead of books, members can borrow high quality, maintained power tools, land management equipment and other workshop tools to complete home projects, or to better manage and upkeep their land. The Triangle Tool Library hold workshops focused on building skills around machinery use, repairing and re-furbishing timber products and many more. The volunteers staffing the facility encourage consumers to make sustainable resource choices, reducing involvement in overconsumption.

Impact and future development: Over the past four years, the Triangle Tool Library have realised the power of collaborative action, networking and the sharing of knowledge. Education on safe and effective use of tools and equipment for its customers is a key priority moving forward, and a step to challenging consumer thinking and behaviour in the consumption of finite resources. The Triangle Tool Library is also growing their Food Tool Library initiative to provide education to community around food processing and preservation.

For more information: www.triangletoollibrary.org.au.

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REGIONAL CIRCULARITY CO-OPERATIVE

Bega circular valley

NATIONAL CIRCULARITY CENTRE

Prepared by the Regional Circularity Co-operative (RCC).

Much of the imagery used in this document has been generously provided free of charge by David Rogers (www.davidrogersphotography.com).

The RCC acknowledges and pays its respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waterways and airspace of Australia.

We learn from these people about the traditions of stewardship of resources and working together as a community to have a lighter, more circular, impact on the environment.

Image Credit: David Rogers Photography | Circular pivot near Bombala in the Bega Circular Valley