



Creating Australia's Most Circular Valley

Bega Circular Valley Community Workshop | Pre-read Materials

28 May 2025

Image Credit: David Rogers Photography | Bermagui & Gulaga Mountain, looking out from the Bega (Circular) Valley into Eurobodalla.



ACKNOWLEDGING OUR INDIGENOUS CIRCULAR HERITAGE

The Regional Circularity Cooperative (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, reciprocity and working together as a community to have a lighter, more circular, impact on the environment.

We also thank the original inhabitants of the Bega (Circular) Valley for the circularity story they have bequeathed us.

A story stretching back millennia encompassing bunan rings located throughout our region, an underlying belief in 'caring for country', and a more considered, balanced and 'circular' way of living that we can all learn from.

The Bega Circular Valley logo acknowledges the role Indigenous knowledge will play in the circular future, with bunan rings subtly integrated within it; created in 2021, the logo was a collaborative design by Walbunja woman Jamara Nye and Narooma based graphic designer Cat Leach.



Biggah a meeting place for ceremonies

Bunan rings are culturally significant ceremonial sites for Aboriginal people. There are a large number of bunan rings located throughout the Bega Valley area and the majority of these sites are on privately owned land.

Tribes within the Yuin Nation would travel and congregate in the Bega Valley for ceremonial practice. Bunan rings are evidence of these ceremonies.

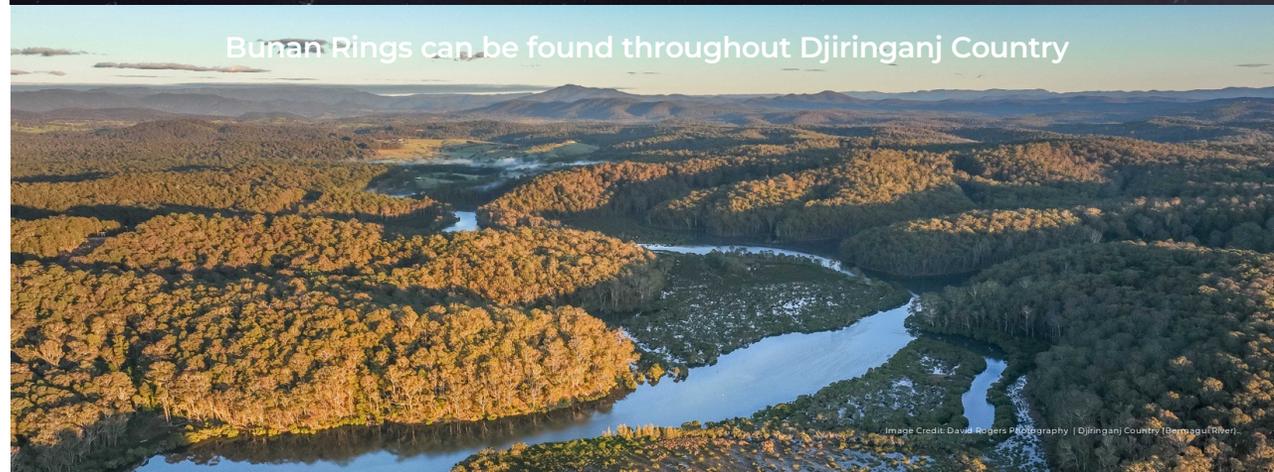
It is important that we work together to protect and preserve these special sites.

"Then something of our Aboriginal Culture will be preserved and the heritage of all Australians, white as well as Aboriginal will be richer."

GUBOO TED THOMAS, APRIL 1979



Bunan Rings can be found throughout Djiringanj Country



CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT

- 1) The intent of the Bega Circular Valley community workshop.
- 2) Workshop running order.
- 3) Facilitators, speakers and panel.
- 4) Indicative workshop themes.
- 5) What you need to do before Wednesday 28 May.



1. THE INTENT OF THE BEGA CIRCULAR VALLEY COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

The Regional Circularity Co-operative (RCC) was established in 2021 to help harness the energy and enthusiasm of community, business, academia and government in the Bega area and beyond to drive the transition of the Bega Valley to a thriving circular economy.

The RCC has spent the last four years experimenting and exploring what circularity could look like in the Bega Valley, as well as supporting and initiating a broad range of initiatives and pilots – and undertaking the small matter of leading the development of the National Circularity Centre.

We have also built an award-winning collaborative approach that underpins all that we do.

We are now at an exciting point in the evolution of the Bega Circular Valley program where we have the opportunity to step back and explore exactly what we want the Bega Circular Valley to be.

And, given the circular transition will not happen without the community itself, we want to do that exploration with key community leaders like yourself.

At the workshop we will spend time exploring what a regional circular economy is, where the Bega Valley currently sits on its circularity journey, and what we want a circular future to look like.

Most importantly, we will do that with as broad a cross-section of the community as possible.

At the end of the workshop, we are aiming to have:

- 1) **A collective understanding of a place-based circular economy and its benefits.**
- 2) **'Current status snapshots' of the circular transition in the Bega Valley.**
- 3) **Identified concrete practical steps towards developing a Bega Valley circularity roadmap.**
- 4) **Grown our community of like-minded people striving to create a Bega Valley that is 'a vibrant and resilient circular region for all those who live, work and visit here and a place-based circularity beacon for the world'.**



As a leader in this community, we invite you to join us for a day exploring what becoming more circular could mean for everyone in the Bega Valley.

Following an overview of circularity and the Regional Circularity Co-operative's vision, your views will be sought on what a circular future for the Bega Valley could look like and how you think we should get there.

Circularity transition experts from CSIRO and others will be in the room to both guide and inform the discussion. A full agenda will be provided ahead of the event.

Given a broad cross-section of the Bega Valley's communities will be present, we will also allow plenty of time for networking and collaboration discussions.

When: Wednesday 28th May 2025, 9:00am – 5:00pm. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Where: Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre, Zingel Place, Bega.

Format: The day will involve a series of facilitated small group workshop sessions.

Numbers are strictly limited, so please RSVP by 21st May at:

<https://events.humanitix.com/bega-circular-valley-community-workshop>



The Bega Circular Valley program is developed and led by the Regional Circularity Co-operative (RCC); a not-for-profit, non-distributing co-operative first established in the Bega Valley in 2021. **Image credit:** David Rogers Photography - Bermagui & Gulaga Mountain.

www.begacircularvalley.com.au



2. WORKSHOP PLANNED RUNNING ORDER

ITEM	TIME
1) Arrival	8.45 – 9.00
2) Welcome to Country and Welcome	9.00
3) Introduction to the day	9.30
4) Understanding a regional circular economy – Includes expert panel and small group discussions	9.35
5) Morning Tea	10.30
6) Understanding a regional circular economy (continued) – Includes expert panel Q&A	11.00
7) Identifying transition needs & opportunities for the Bega Valley	11.30
8) Lunch	12.30
9) Identifying transition needs & opportunities (continued) – Includes small group discussions – Afternoon tea will be available in the auditorium during this time	1.30
10) Workshop reflection and 'what's next'	3.45
11) Close and opportunity for post-workshop networking	4.30 – 5.30

Please note that the timings above are indicative only; adjustments will be made on the day as needed.

3. FACILITATORS, SPEAKERS AND PANEL



**Dr. Heinz Schandl – Facilitator
CSIRO**

Heinz is CSIRO's Circular Economy lead and an international science leader for sustainable materials management and the decoupling of economic activity from environmental pressures and impacts.



**Dr Colleen MacMillan – Facilitator
CSIRO**

Colleen is a Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO and co-Deputy of the Circular Economy Research and Industry Collaboration, with a focus on strategy, sustainable fibres and materials, and community collaboration.



**Andrew Taylor – Speaker
Regional Circularity Co-operative (RCC)**

Andrew has been the CEO of the RCC since late 2022. He has over 20 years' experience across the fields of sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, biosecurity, animal health, emergency management and community development.



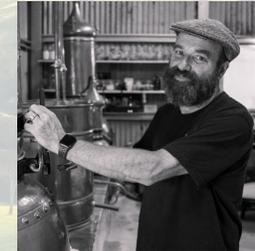
**Anthony McMahon – Panellist
Bega Valley Shire Council**

Anthony started with Bega Valley Shire Council in 2018, before becoming its CEO in April 2022. He has extensive local government experience having previously worked at Boorowa and Hilltops Councils.



**Barry Irvin – Speaker & Panellist
Bega Group and RCC**

Barry is the Executive Chairman of Bega Group and Chair of the RCC; he is recognised globally for his extensive experience in the dairy industry and was instrumental in the establishment of the RCC and Bega Circular Valley program.



**Gavin Hughes – Panellist
North of Eden Distillery**

Gavin is the Head Distiller and co-owner of North of Eden Distillery, a Bega Valley business that has been on an evolving circularity journey since 2018. Gavin has over 35 years' experience in FMCG manufacturing and was previously the CEO of the Biofuels Association of Australia.



**Liz Dixon – Panellist
NSW DPIRD**

Liz is a Deputy Director in the NSW Dept. of Primary Industries & Regional Development. She leads a team of Economic Development specialists in the South East region, helping businesses to grow. With a background in sustainability and environmental planning, she is a passionate advocate for circularity.



**Russell Fitpatrick – Speaker
Bega Valley Shire Council**

Russell has served as a Councillor in the Bega Valley Shire since 2009 and has held the position of Mayor since 2021. He also serves as the Chair of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Executive and Deputy Chair of the Country Mayors Association of NSW.



**Vanessa Spinelli – Panellist
Grow the Future (GTF)**

Vanessa is the Chief Operating Officer at Grow The Future, a social enterprise offering hands-on training, engagement and employment opportunities to local youth. Further detail about GTF's circularity journey will be available at the workshop.

We will also be joined by Aunty Glenda Dixon who will undertake a welcome to country and Aunty Ellen Mundy who will share some of the region's indigenous circularity story.

4. INDICATIVE WORKSHOP THEMES

To help us explore what the Bega Valley's future circular economy could look like, we have identified twelve themes* that will form the basis of the small group workshop sessions on the day. These themes do not cover every aspect of a future circular economy but do cover the ones that are currently most relevant to the Bega Valley.

These themes are:

- 1) **Circular entrepreneurship, innovation and business.**
- 2) **Net zero energy transition in the valley.**
- 3) **Food and nutrition (inc. manufacturing and supply).**
- 4) **Circular land management (inc. agriculture, forestry, fisheries/ aquaculture, natural environment & water management).**
- 5) **Circular health care & social assistance (inc. local NFPs/ community groups, health & aged care).**
- 6) **Circular construction and the built environment.**
- 7) **Mobility, transport and connectivity.**
- 8) **Circular manufacturing and resource management (inc. 'industrial symbiosis').**
- 9) **Circular tourism (inc. the National Circularity Centre, recreation, sport & leisure).**
- 10) **Circular education (via schools/ tertiary and the National Circularity Centre).**
- 11) **Circular music, culture and the arts.**
- 12) **Circular retail, clothing and textiles.**

Please note that we may not cover every one of these themes at the workshop, the final themes selected will depend on which are of most interest to those attending.

Attendees have all identified two preferred themes and will ideally be placed on a table to discuss one of their selected themes – although we cannot guarantee this given the number of community leaders attending.

* See the 28 work areas/ themes detailed in the separate Bega Circular Valley program document to see how the twelve themes on this page fit with the planned long-term circular transition.



5. WHAT YOU NEED TO DO BEFORE WEDNESDAY 28 MAY

Ahead of the workshop, if you do nothing else, we ask that you spend some time thinking about what a more circular Bega Valley could mean for every inhabitant of the region and how we as a community can make the transition to a more circular economy happen.

We would also suggest you have a think about the two themes you nominated when you accepted the workshop invitation – and what you personally could do to help the Bega Valley transition to a more circular economy.

To help with this, you can access a range of pre-read materials via the following website address: www.2iis.com.au/begacircularvalleyworkshop.

Here you will find some background information about the circular economy, Regional Circularity Co-operative, Bega Circular Valley program and National Circularity Centre.

A number of local circular case studies can also be found here to give you a taste of the inspiring circular innovation already happening in the valley.

In the various documents, we have also included some links to a small selection of videos and other circularity websites that might be of use.

Please do not feel like you need to review all the information available from this website; we have provided a breadth of information to cater for everyone who is joining the workshop (both the circular economy experts and the newcomers).

If you have any problems accessing the website or downloading any of the documents, please contact us at info@begacircularvalley.com.au.

We look forward to seeing you on the 28th May.



An aerial photograph of a sandy beach with waves breaking onto the shore. Many people are visible on the beach and in the shallow water. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the center of the image.

‘Like all major transitions in human history, the shift from a linear to a circular economy will be a tumultuous one. It will feature heroes and pioneers, naysayers and obstacles, and moments of victory and doubt. If we persevere, however, we will put our economy back on a path of growth and sustainability.’

Frans van Houten, Circular Business Thought Leader and ex-CEO of Royal Philips Electronics.

begacircularvalley.com.au
info@begacircularvalley.com.au

REGIONAL
CIRCULARITY
CO-OPERATIVE

Bega
circular
valley

NATIONAL
CIRCULARITY
CENTRE

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

www.begacircularvalley.com.au | CONFIDENTIAL | © RCC May 2025

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.