

REGIONAL
CIRCULARITY
CO-OPERATIVE

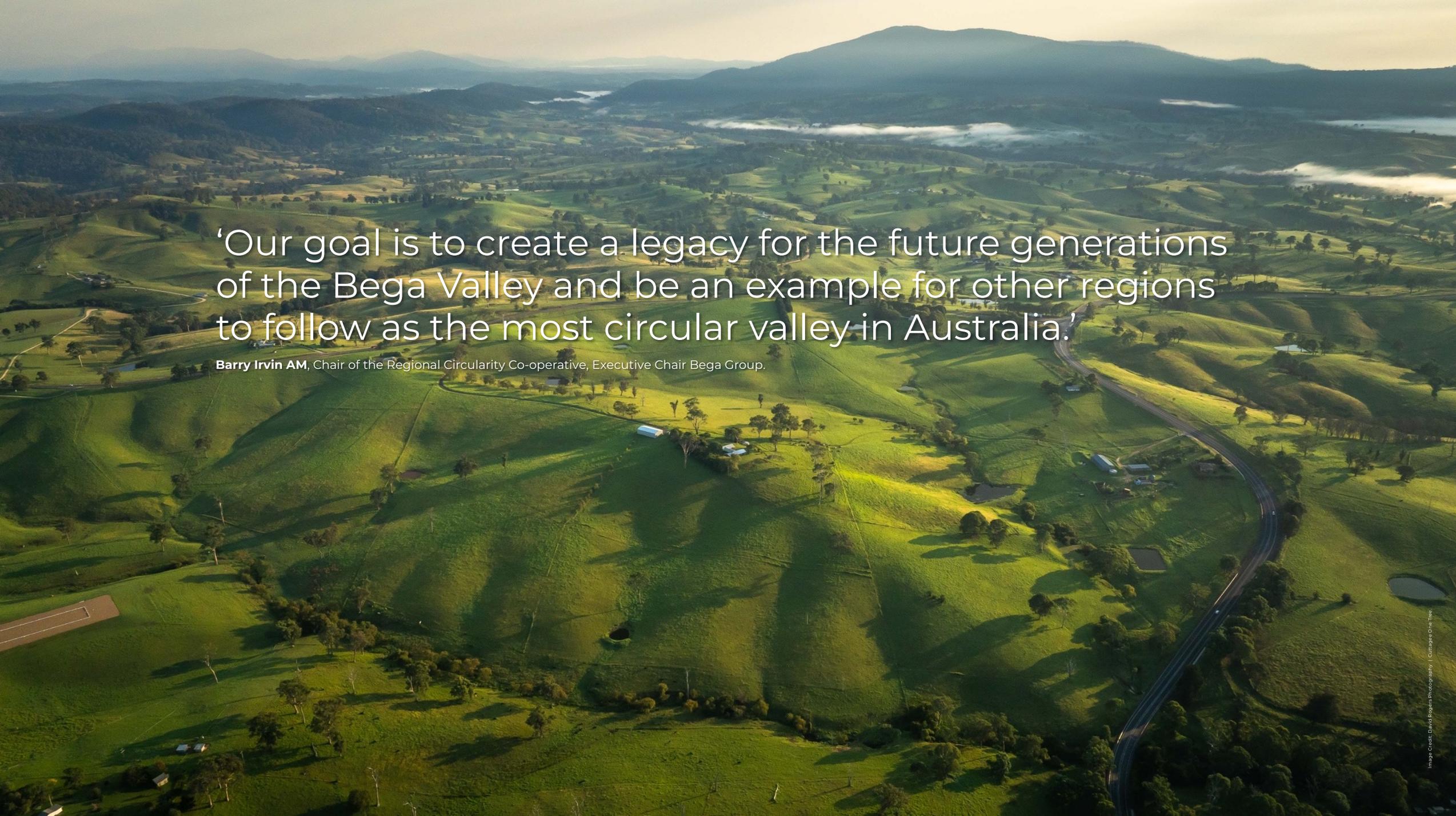
Bega
circular
valley

NATIONAL
CIRCULARITY
CENTRE

Creating Australia's Most Circular Valley

A vision for place-based circularity in the Bega Valley and beyond

June 2025



'Our goal is to create a legacy for the future generations of the Bega Valley and be an example for other regions to follow as the most circular valley in Australia.'

Barry Irvin AM, Chair of the Regional Circularity Co-operative, Executive Chair Bega Group.

REGIONAL
CIRCULARITY
CO-OPERATIVE

Not-for-profit, non-distributing co-operative leading the Bega Valley's transition to a more circular economy

Bega
circular
valley

High-impact regional development program to help accelerate the region's circular transition

NATIONAL
CIRCULARITY
CENTRE

Australia's National Centre for Circular Discovery



Image Credit: David Rogers Photography | Bermagui & Gungah Mountain, looking out from the Bega | Circular Valley into Eurumbidgee



OUR VISION

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.

OUR PEOPLE AND PLACE

A rural valley on the pristine Sapphire Coast of New South Wales with an Indigenous circularity story stretching back millennia and a current linear economy centred on agriculture, fisheries, forestry, food manufacturing, care services, tourism, construction, hospitality and the arts that has begun the multi-generational transition to a more circular way of living that will allow the region's diverse communities to thrive in a climate impacted future.

OUR ROLE

To work hand-in-hand with the community, business, government, academia, circular thought leaders and others as:

- 1) A leader, innovator, broker and connector for the region's circular transition;
- 2) An importer, facilitator, creator and amplifier of circularity best practise; and
- 3) A 'circularity beacon' inspiring other regional communities and businesses in Australia and around the world to pursue their own more circular future.



THE REGIONAL CIRCULARITY CO-OPERATIVE

Based on Djiringanj Country, the RCC is a not-for-profit, non-distributing co-operative that was established in 2021.

With Bega Group as the driving force, the RCC has already built strong partnerships with the community, business, academia, government and other circular regions, all working together to demonstrate circular transition pathways through pilots in the Bega Circular Valley and beyond.

In the short time since our establishment, we've built a small team of specialists initially focused on accelerating circular agriculture, fisheries & aquaculture, supporting existing & emerging circular businesses, initiating or expanding energy & resource re-use projects, and engaging with the local community – all under an evolving 'Bega Circular Valley' roadmap first created in 2022.

We've also been leading the National Circularity Centre project – a landmark initiative that will see Australia's 'world-leading circular destination for curious minds' open its' doors in the heart of the Bega Circular Valley from late 2026.





THE BEGA CIRCULAR VALLEY PROGRAM

'Bega Circular Valley' is a high-impact regional development program designed to help accelerate the region's transition to a more circular economy.

Developed and led by the Regional Circularity Co-operative (RCC), the program aims to help guide the Bega Valley's transition to first become Australia's most circular regional economy by 2030 and then target becoming a world leading circular region by 2050.

This transformational shift towards circularity will make the Bega Valley an even more vibrant, sustainable and resilient community for all those who live, work and visit here.

Built on comprehensive collaboration and a philosophy of freely sharing information, the program will serve as an inspirational demonstration of place-based, whole of economy circular transition from which other regional communities in Australia and around the world can learn.



THE NATIONAL CIRCULARITY CENTRE

The National Circularity Centre (NCC) is funded by the Commonwealth Government, NSW Government and Bega Group, and designed by Cox Architecture. It will be built by the RCC in Bega over the coming 18 months.

The centre will showcase the circular economy transition of the Bega Valley, and act as a beacon for circularity efforts across the country and internationally.

The centre will include a:

- 1) **Circular economy education centre**, demonstrating local, national and international circular economy initiatives, and hosting events;
- 2) **'Hub' for circularity experts** to come together to research and collaborate to drive the transition to a circular economy;
- 3) **Café and restaurant** focusing on local food, with capacity for functions; and
- 4) **Tourist information and heritage centre**, with a gift shop showcasing local circular products and produce.

Additional funding is currently being sought to optimise the building, achieve Living Building Challenge accreditation and build the digital experience and infrastructure that will enable amplification of impact, and to demonstrate the circularity efforts of all partners as a means of engagement and education.

We are collaborating with The Powerhouse Museum, Questacon, multiple academic institutions and others to deliver a worldclass visitor experience and education program.

More details on the National Circularity Centre can be found [here](#).









NATIONAL
CIRCULARITY
CENTRE



CLICK THE URL BELOW TO PLAY THE NCC VIDEO
(VIA THE INTERNET)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xY3Sd7fXKc>

THE BEGA VALLEY

Some key stats

Population: **35,942** (2021 Census)

Land Area: **6,279 km²**

Population Density: **5.8/km²**

Gross Regional Product (GRP): **\$2.14 billion**

GRP/Cap: **\$59,700**

Current Economy: agriculture/dairy, agri-food, forestry, fisheries/aquaculture, tourism, recreation & hospitality, manufacturing/ industrial (limited), care services, construction, and the arts.

Currently estimated to be **~6% circular**.

ABOUT THE BEGA VALLEY

Based on the Sapphire Coast in southeast New South Wales, the Bega Valley is a rural community with an Indigenous circularity story stretching back millennia and a current largely linear economy centred on agriculture, fisheries, forestry, food manufacturing, care services, tourism, construction, hospitality and the arts. However, community and businesses in the region are mobilising with enthusiasm to transition to a circular economy.

A region with significant biodiversity and a strong heritage in dairy and beef farming, forestry and fisheries.

An ancestral land of significance to First Nations people.

An inspiring valley to live in and visit.

The birthplace of one of Australia's iconic food businesses, Bega Group.

A place that attracts ever-growing numbers of artist and musicians.

Fertile ground for innovators and entrepreneurs.

A place where being part of the community matters.

It is also a place that has faced multiple devastating bushfires, suffered significant economic loss through the COVID-19 pandemic, and is facing into the challenges that climate variability present.

Like much of rural Australia, its young, marginalised and Indigenous people face significant social and economic challenges, with future opportunities too often limited.

WHAT CIRCULARITY WILL MEAN FOR THE BEGA VALLEY

We imagine a Bega Valley that is home to a vibrant, sustainable and resilient regional circular economy by 2050.

A region run on renewable energy that benefits the local community; with ever-more circular retail, hospitality and tourism offerings right across the valley; with an innovation hub supporting a diverse range of successful circular businesses and manufacturers; with a strengthened regenerative farming sector that supports biodiversity and is resilient in the face of climate change; with social equity for all, not just the lucky ones; with a circular arts and culture sector that connects and inspires; with a more circular construction industry providing housing and infrastructure for all; with a thriving community that treats waste as a resource; and with First Nations people at the heart of it all.

Somewhere seen by residents and visitors as a unique and inspiring place to live, work and visit.

Attracting young people, new families, entrepreneurs, investors and tourists to experience and be part of our thriving circular valley.

Providing all who want to stay here throughout their lives with the economic and social opportunities to do just that.

Australia's most circular valley that inspires other regions to see what's possible and then go on their own transformational circular journeys.



**'THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS
A SOLUTION FRAMEWORK
THAT OFFERS BETTER
ECONOMIC GROWTH WHILE
ADDRESSING THE MOST
PRESSING GLOBAL
CHALLENGES.'**

Dame Ellen MacArthur, Founder of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.



‘PLACE-BASED CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROJECTS THAT ARE MADE FOR AND WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES MAKE THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY TANGIBLE – SOMETHING THAT CAN BE EXPERIENCED IN REAL LIFE.’

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

WHY PLACE-BASED CIRCULARITY IS SO IMPORTANT

Whilst the principles behind the circular economy are simple, changing the complex, intertwined systems underpinning our current linear economy to enable circularity is not.

Over the past two decades it has become evident that working to drive the circular transition at the ‘place-based scale’ – as exists in the Bega Valley – is particularly effective, as stated in multiple recent reports.

At the place-based level, new circular economy approaches can be developed and tested relatively quickly. Funding, resourcing and governance needs are lower than for large regional, city-wide or national programmes.

Additionally, working in a cohesive and enthusiastic community enables integration of all sectors and businesses when designing and executing the transition, enabling a much more comprehensive analysis of progress. Greater experimentation is possible because the risk vs. reward equation is so much more favourable.

Perhaps most importantly, local people reap tangible, immediate benefits. A focus on place-based circularity can quickly create jobs, support resilience, improve access to local, nutritious food, drive innovation and connect communities.

Made up of one river catchment, with mountains and forest to the west, north and south and the ocean to the east, just three main access roads, one airport and one port, the Bega Valley is also an ideal region within which to ‘measure what matters’ and ensure we track progress and quantify what works when it comes to regional, place-based circularity

As a clearly defined ‘place’ that is large enough to properly test circular approaches, but small enough that experimentation can be encouraged and scaled, the Bega Valley is perfectly positioned to be at the forefront of place-based circularity in Australia.

AN AWARD-WINNING COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

If we are to successfully help accelerate the multi-generational circular transition in the Bega Valley and beyond, we know we can't do it alone.

Since its' establishment in 2020, the Regional Circularity Co-operative, has continuously looked to find new ways to build collaboration between the community, business, government, academia and civil society.

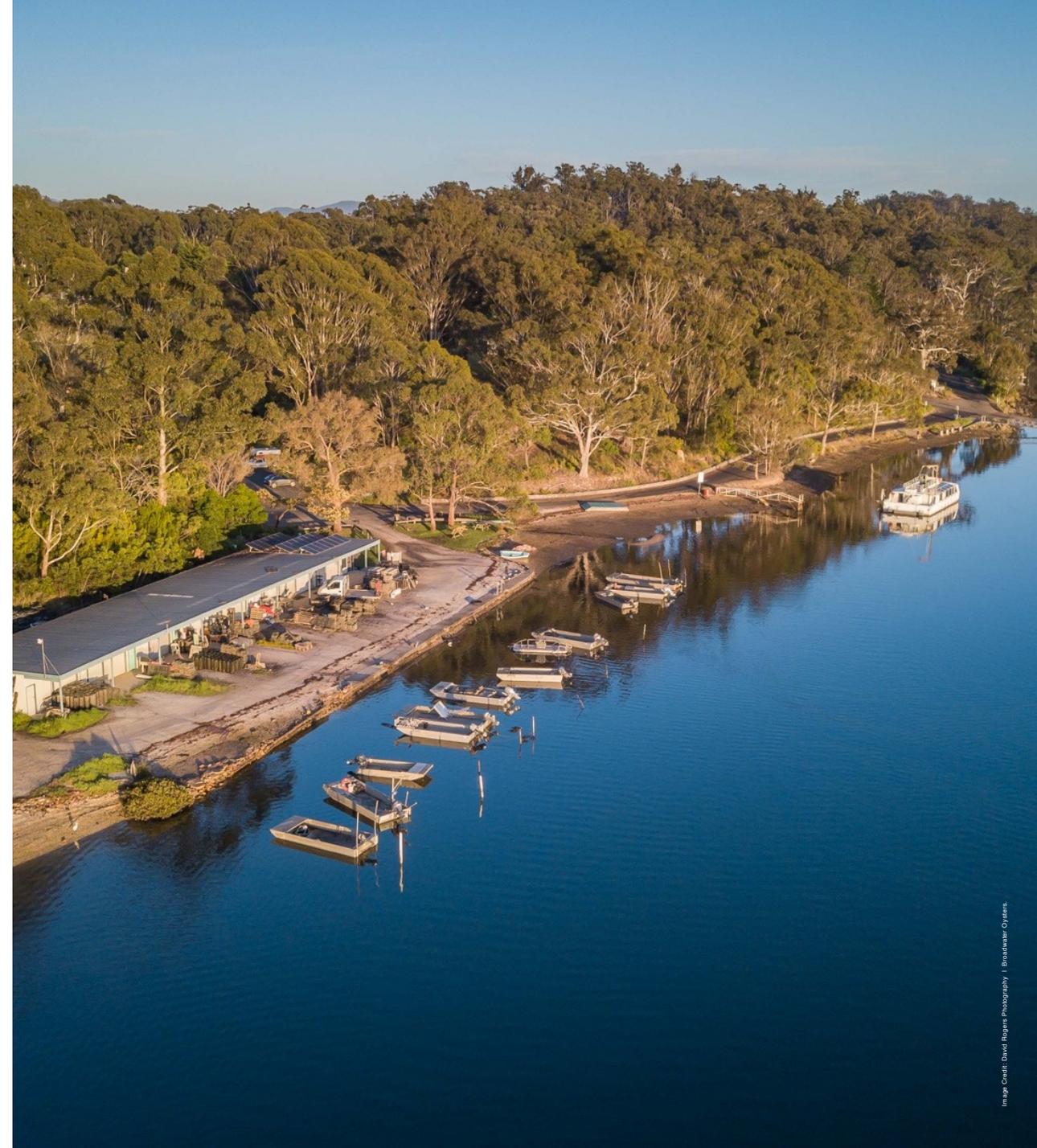
This has led us to seek out new forms of partnership, to reach out to others to learn from their successes (and failures), and to encourage those who usually work in competition to find a way to work together. This approach has been developed and driven by Bega Group, representing an internationally rare example of a corporate driving change for public good.

We don't yet have all the answers but are proud of the collaborative approach we have started to build and enthused to keep evolving this approach in the years and decades ahead.

In recognition of our efforts to drive new forms of collaboration, in late 2024 the Bega Circular Valley program won the inaugural Australian Design Council Impact Award in recognition of its potential 'to shape Australia's design-led future across our economy, society, environment and culture'.



www.australiandesigncouncil.org



CURRENT RCC FOUNDATION MEMBERS



Alongside our Foundation Members, we collaborate with and support a broad range of Bega Valley based businesses, organisations and community groups to drive our region's circular transition.

OTHER KEY PARTNERSHIPS



CURRENT AND EMERGING CIRCULAR ECONOMY HUBS AND REGIONS

Australia



We anticipate our Australian place-based network of CE hubs will continue to expand as the Bega Circular Valley program develops.

International



We will be building our international best practice partnerships and collaborations through 2025; we currently collaborate closely with Circular Friesland, Circular Flanders and Beam Circular, and will be exploring how to work with other circular regions and thought leaders like the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and Circle Economy as we build towards the opening of the National Circularity Centre in late 2026.

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

As we look to grow the circular economy in the Bega Valley, we are always looking to find other regions on a similar path to us that we can learn from.

Once we find relevant regions, we look to connect with the organisation leading the circular transition there and collaborate in any way possible.

Organisations that we currently collaborate particularly closely with are:

Hunter Circular, Gippsland Circular Economy Hub, Barwon Circularity and Northern Rivers Circular Economy Initiative (Australia). Other circular regions in New South Wales and Victoria with similar ambition and challenges.

Circular Friesland (The Netherlands). The circular region most similar to the Bega Circular Valley with strengths in organisational structure, collaboration, selected work areas and innovation.

Circular Flanders (Belgium). A large region (approximately ½ of Belgium) that has been involved in the circular economy since 2006; has strengths in policy, communications, community engagement and measurement.

Beam Circular (USA). A young, rapidly growing organisation with a bioeconomy and agriculture focus – entrepreneurial and very effective at sourcing funding.

As we build the Bega Circular Valley program, and the National Circularity Centre gets closer to opening its' doors, the network of circular organisations we collaborate with will continue to expand. Our collaboration with **Circular Australia**, in particular, is key to achieving success.





LEADING AND GUIDING THE CIRCULAR TRANSITION

Whilst we only started our journey in late 2020, we have already commenced a range of circular projects and pilot programs, are supporting existing circular initiatives in the community and endeavouring to put in place all the necessary organisational foundations of the Regional Circularity Co-operative itself.

Having the co-operative in place and growing has enabled us to start leading and guiding the circular transition in the Bega Valley, as well as forging a broad range of collaborations and partnerships with leading circular organisations in Australia and around the world.

We have also undertaken some initial mapping of circularity in the Bega Valley, Australia and globally to help us understand how best we can accelerate the growth of place-based circularity here, and around the world.

This mapping helped us to understand the 28 interconnected work areas that we will need to transition to circularity if we are to make the Bega Valley the most circular regional economy in Australia.

A summary of the local circularity mapping, our strategic framework, overview of work areas and some of our current/ emerging projects can be found on the following pages.

Circularity Mapping | Understanding the make-up of the Bega Valley to better support the circular transition

SELECTED ORGANISATIONS ONLY

Last updated 12/02/25

306 Organisations/Groups/Initiatives
31 Categories



- NOTES**
- This circularity map is a work in progress and does not include every circular organisation or initiative present in the Bega Valley, although it does include most of the organisations with a current connection to the Regional Circularity Collective.
 - Sectors not fully captured include: entertainment, events, health & wellness, landscaping & gardening, marketing & advertising, NFPs, professional services and real estate.
 - Key data sources: Circular Australia, ACE Hub, BVSC business directory, RCC networks, Zis desktop research, various circularity reports & publications.
 - The mapping is based on a review of existing materials describing the role of each organisation and from input provided by the individuals consulted during this project. Given the multiple sources used, and need to effectively map each organisation, the placement of each organisation is indicative only.

OUR VISION

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OUR PEOPLE AND PLACE

A rural valley on New South Wales's pristine Sapphire Coast with an Indigenous circularity story stretching back millennia and a current linear economy centred on agriculture, fisheries, forestry, food manufacturing, care services, tourism, construction, hospitality and the arts that has begun the multi-generational transition to a more circular way of living that will allow the region's diverse communities to thrive in a climate impacted future.

OUR ROLE *

To work hand-in-hand with the community, business, government, academia and others as: 1) a leader, innovator, broker and connector for the region's circular transition; 2) an importer, facilitator, creator and amplifier of circularity best practise; and 3) a 'circularity beacon' inspiring other regional communities in Australia and around the world to pursue their own more circular future.

**When considering the RCC's role over the longer-term, there is a question as to how long the organisation will need to exist in its 'fullest form. For example, once the transition is successfully underway, the NCC would obviously endure, but the Bega Circular Valley Program itself might be wound up.*

STRATEGIC PILLARS

1

ACT AS A PATHFINDER AND CIRCULARITY BEACON FOR THE BEGA VALLEY REGION AND BEYOND



2

IDENTIFY, PRIORITISE, CATALYSE AND IMPLEMENT THE WORKSTREAMS AND PROJECTS NEEDED TO GROW THE REGION'S CIRCULAR ECONOMY



3

INSPIRE AND SUPPORT THE COMMUNITIES OF THE BEGA VALLEY TO PARTICIPATE IN AND BENEFIT FROM THE CIRCULAR TRANSITION



4

UNLOCK THE REVENUE AND RESOURCES NEEDED TO BOTH FUND THE TRANSITION AND SUSTAIN THE BCV PROGRAM & NCC



5

BUILD THE RCC'S CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY TO CATALYSE, GUIDE AND ACCELERATE THE TRANSITION



28 WORK AREAS/ THEMES UNDERPINNING THE BEGA CIRCULAR VALLEY'S LONG-TERM CIRCULAR TRANSITION

BASELINING/ MFA, DATA & MEASUREMENT, DIGITAL SERVICES/ ENABLEMENT <small>IN DEVELOPMENT</small>	NET ZERO ENERGY TRANSITION <small>INITIAL FUNDING BEING EXPLORED, FULL WORKSTREAM TO BE SCOPED</small>	RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE WATER SUPPLY <small>INC. ON-FARM WATER STORAGE PROJECT, FULL WORKSTREAM TO BE SCOPED</small>	LAND MANAGEMENT: AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY <small>INITIAL AGRICULTURE PROJECTS UNDERWAY, FULL WORKSTREAM TO BE SCOPED</small>	FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE <small>INITIAL PROJECTS UNDERWAY, FULL WORKSTREAM TO BE SCOPED</small>	NATIONAL CIRCULARITY CENTRE (NCC) <small>NCC BUILD UNDERWAY, ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF EXPERIENCE/ CONTENT, FULL WORKSTREAM TO BE SCOPED</small>	CIRCULAR RESOURCE RECOVERY & RE-USE <small>INC. COMMUNITY-FOCUSED SYSTEMS (E.G. SHARE/ REPAIR ECONOMY), PLASTICS PROJECT IN DEVELOPMENT</small>
MANUFACTURING, PRODUCTION & SUPPLY CHAIN <small>INITIAL BEGA GRP. FOCUS</small>	CIRCULAR INNOVATION/ FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES <small>INC. THE BIO-ECONOMY</small>	INDUSTRIAL SYMBIOSIS, CIRCULAR PRECINCTS & INNOVATION PARKS	NATURAL CAPITAL, CARBON & BIODIVERSITY <small>(INC. ENVIRONMENTAL REGENERATION AND CARBON FARMING/TRADING)</small>	HOUSING & BUILT ENVIRONMENT/ CONSTRUCTION	TRANSPORT, MOBILITY & LOGISTICS	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE & SUPPORT SERVICES <small>(INC. HEALTH & AGED CARE)</small>
CIRCULAR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT/ WORKFORCE TRAINING	SOCIAL EQUITY	INDIGENOUS/ ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES	BUSINESS, FOOD, HOSPITALITY, RETAIL & EVENTS	CLOTHING & TEXTILES	CIRCULAR TOURISM, RECREATION, SPORT & LEISURE	MUSIC, CULTURE & THE ARTS
EDUCATION	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & BEHAVIOUR CHANGE <small>YOUNG PEOPLE AS A KEY AUDIENCE</small>	ROADMAP LEADERSHIP & TRANSITION CO-ORDINATION	CIRCULARITY BEST PRACTISE <small>IMPORTING, CREATING & EXPORTING</small>	RCC MEMBER & PARTNER PROGRAMS, COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE	GENERAL MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS <small>INC. EVENTS & FORUMS</small>	REVENUE GENERATION, INCOME STREAMS, FUNDING, INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS

'THEMES'/ WORK AREAS KEY

<small>EXISTING OR EMERGING THEMES/ WORK AREAS</small>	<small>SYSTEMIC OR FOUNDATIONAL THEMES/ WORK AREAS</small>	<small>BUSINESS, CONSUMER OR COMMUNITY FOCUSED THEMES/ WORK AREAS</small>	<small>ORGANISATIONAL & INTERNAL THEMES/ WORK AREAS</small>
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SELECTED CURRENT & EMERGING PROJECTS (2021 –2025)



1. National Circularity Centre (NCC)

Design and construction of Australia's National Centre for Circular Discovery in Bega (scheduled to open in late 2026).



2. Regional Circularity Baselining

World first place-based circularity baselining and opportunity identification project with CSIRO, Deloitte and others.



3. Energy & Decarbonisation

Heat exchange & energy efficiency in ag. and Net Zero Energy Roadmap programs in partnership with the NSW Decarb. Hub, UoW, CSU, ANU & Essential Energy.



4. Natural Capital

Includes a pilot on dairy farms to explore robust measurement and reporting of carbon and biodiversity credentials and collaborations with entire supply chains. Climate Friendly, Rabobank & ZNEAg CRC.



5. Circular Fisheries & Aquaculture

National circularity in fisheries and aquaculture program, led by the RCC in partnership with the FRDC & others. Phase 2 currently in development.



6. Circular Tourism Program

Leverage the creation of the NCC to develop a region-wide circular tourism program, initially based on learnings gained from our collaboration with Circular Friesland in the Netherlands.



7. Circular Manufacturing

Multiple circular initiatives implemented by Bega Group (Locally and nationally) and other businesses in the Bega Valley



8. Indigenous Circular Partnerships

Continue to build partnerships with LALCs & broader Aboriginal community to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the BCV program and NCC, and to identify opportunities region-wide.



9. Circular Entrepreneurship

Support for numerous existing and emerging local circularity focused initiatives and businesses.



10. 2050 Strategy Development

Development of a long-term strategic framework and operating model for the RCC, BCV and NCC – with input from other world-leading circular regions.

SELECTED CURRENT & EMERGING PROJECTS (2021 –2025) | Continued



11. Circularity Roadmap Evolution

Revise and update the current Bega Circular Valley roadmap to be a more community-centred and 'live' document that guides the transition to 2050.



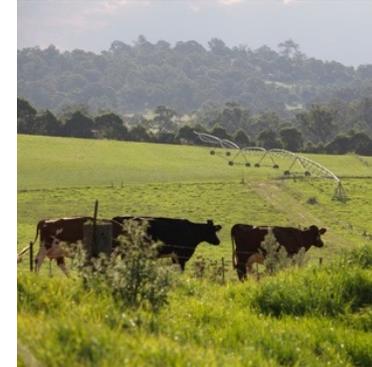
12. Net-Zero Energy Transition

Development of Australia's first community-wide net zero energy transition roadmap and support for phase 1 energy transition program.



13. Circular & Resilient Water Supply

Implement a world-leading circular water supply program that provides a sustainable & resilient solution that helps meet the community's future needs.



14. Dairy & Beef Circular Pilot

Dairy and beef circular decarbonisation pilot program in partnership with NSW Dept. of Primary Industries and others.



15. Circular Education Pilot

Implement a circular education pilot program within all the Bega Valley's K-12 schools to build foundational circular knowledge in the next generation.



16. Regenerative Agriculture

Natural resource & regenerative ag. programs delivering on ground works and regenerative/ resilience activities on farm. Partnership with NSW Govt, Great Eastern Ranges, Landcare, CSU, Essential Energy and Southern NSW Drought Hub.



17. Circular Resource Optimisation

Agricultural resource optimisation, including managing agricultural plastics with PACT Group, smart water resource optimisation, and organic waste mgt.



18. Circular Construction

Use our pioneering work building the NCC to kick-start a circular construction program, including piloting emerging bio-based circular building techniques and low carbon concrete.



19. Circular Best Practise/Innovation

Continue to develop partnerships & collaborations with other circular regions and develop a comprehensive database of circularity best practise; accelerate circular business innovation and build a strong local community of practice



20. Community Engagement

Engage and harness the energy and momentum of the communities of the Bega Valley in the BCV program and educate them about the benefits of circularity. RCC, CSIRO, Bega Valley Shire Council, NSW Dept. of Education & others.



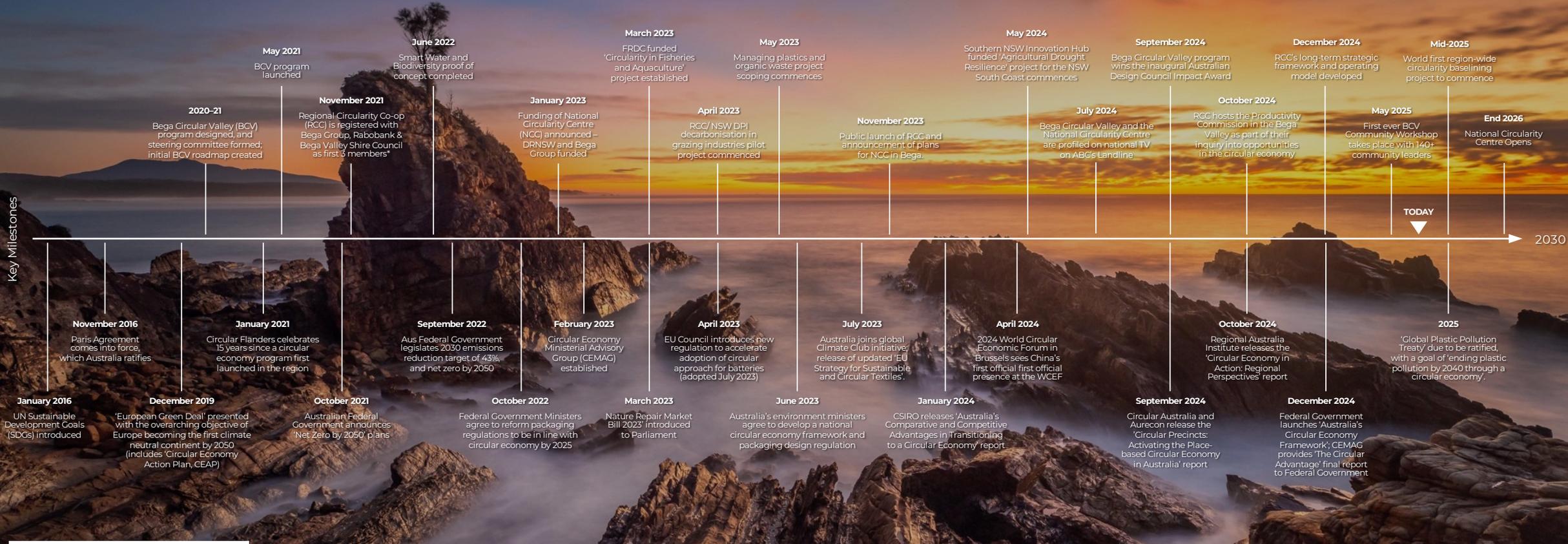
CLICK THE URL BELOW TO PLAY
(VIA THE INTERNET)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PEJ4BOvcg>

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REGIONAL CIRCULARITY CO-OPERATIVE (RCC)

REGIONAL CIRCULARITY CO-OPERATIVE

Key Milestones



AUSTRALIA & INTERNATIONAL

*The RCC now has 15 foundation members: AACo, Asahi, Bega Group, Bega Valley Shire Council, Charles Sturt University, CSIRO, Deloitte, Essential Energy, FRDC, KPMG, NBN, PACT Group, Rabobank, South East Forestry Hub and University of Wollongong; it also has nearly 50 current and emerging partnerships/ collaborations, and a growing number of community members.

An aerial photograph of a town and its surrounding landscape. The town is in the center, with a grid of streets and various buildings. The surrounding area is lush green with rolling hills, fields, and a winding river. The sky is blue with some clouds. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing a quote and the name of the speaker.

'If we could build an economy that would use things rather than use them up, we could build a future.'

Dame Ellen MacArthur DBE, World Record-breaking Solo Yachtswoman, Founder of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and Circular Economy Thought Leader.

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

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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.