

Circularity

2024

26 – 27 NOVEMBER

DOLTONE HOUSE, SYDNEY

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AUSTRALIAN
CIRCULAR
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PLANET ARK

2024 Key Takeaways Report

Enabling
Resource
Efficient
Value Chains

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A Message from our Deputy CEO

The circular economy is no longer just a vision—it's a necessary and urgent pathway to a sustainable future. That is the primary message to take away from Circularity 2024, the third iteration of Australia's leading annual circular economy conference from the Australian Circular Economy Hub.

Over two days, we explored how to enable resource-efficient value chains and accelerate the transition to a circular economy. With thought-provoking keynotes from Dr. Janez Potočnik and The Hon. Matt Kean, inspiring sessions from circular economy experts, dynamic workshops, and the Innovation Pitch Fest, Circularity sparked important conversations and created valuable connections. Together, we've ignited meaningful discussions that will continue to drive progress towards a circular economy. I hope you left with fresh insights and a renewed commitment to sustainability.

This year's conference highlighted several key themes. Firstly, the circular economy remains in its infancy but is taking small steps. It represents a significant shift from the entrenched linear systems that have shaped economic growth since the industrial revolution, and to realise its potential will require widespread change across all sectors of society. Secondly, the urgency of this transition cannot be overstated, as scaling circular solutions demands practical action and holistic systems thinking to address mounting ecological and social challenges. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, collaboration across industries, governments, and supply chains will be essential to achieving a just and sustainable circular economy.

The conference also showcased the continued importance of the Australian Circular Economy Hub in advancing Australia's circular transition. A significant highlight of the program this year was the launch of the Circular Future Fund, Australia's first dedicated circular economy investment fund. Created in partnership with Boston Global and launched at Circularity, the fund will aim to drive circularity in Australia by supporting local ventures aligned with circular principles. We also featured the ongoing work of the Product Stewardship Hub, which is fostering industry collaboration to dismantle barriers and create sustainable business pathways.

Events like Circularity continue to bring together Australia's circular economy leaders, setting an inspiring example and encouraging cross-sector collaboration for a sustainable future. Circularity 2024 would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our conference partner Diversified Communications Australia, our steering committee, sponsors, speakers, attendees, partners, and event staff.

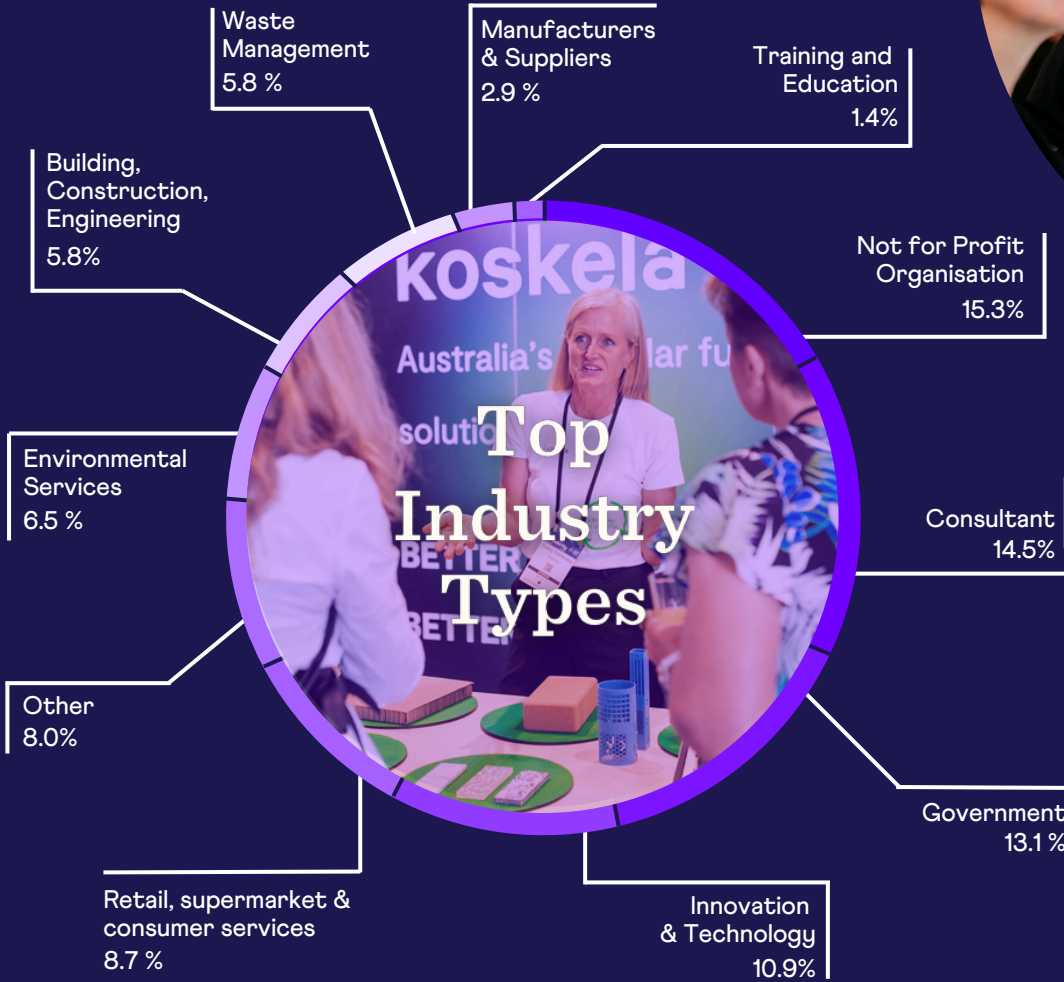


The team from Planet Ark and the ACE Hub and I are all incredibly proud to be at the forefront of this movement. It's inspiring to witness the growing commitment to circular economy principles from individuals, organisations, and industries alike. Together, we are building a future where circularity is not just a goal but a reality.

ADAM CULLEY
Deputy CEO, Planet Ark



Our Visitors



Headline Stats

300+
Professionals were a part of Circularity 2024

200+
Conference Delegates in attendance

27
Conference Sessions

60
Expert Speakers

Top Job Functions



“Circularity 2024 is and has been one of the key events where circular economy practitioners gather and talk about all things CE! This year was no different! Congratulations to the team at Planet Ark -Paul Klymenko, Nicole T Garofano, PhD, AAIP, Chelsea McLean, Jane Horvath, Adam Culley and many more for hosting this amidst different challenges currently.”

DR MAYURI WIJAYASUNDARA, ANVARTA

2024 KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS



This year's Circularity welcomed over 300+ delegates join us across the two days, at Doltone House Darling Island, Sydney. Our attendees represented nearly 200 organisations, from local, state and federal government, educators, start-ups, plus well established local and global corporates.

The program saw almost 70 speakers in 30 sessions across the two-day agenda.

Day one was focused on some key enablers necessary to achieve resource efficient value chains, covering topics such as policy, collaboration, and circular design. Our Principal sponsor ANZ hosted the session on finance, while our Keynote sponsor Monash Sustainable Development Institute, hosted a session to launch its Circular Labs and to discuss the need for system changes for organisations.

Day two launched into practice—where is the action taking place? The program introduced industry examples – including but not limited to product stewardship, metrics and measurement for industry and government, plus three sector streams on textiles, places and the built environment and the aluminium chains. Day two also looked ahead to the future and from our second Principal sponsor, Sustainability Victoria, explored how innovation is key to that future.

This year, based on feedback from previous events, we introduced two interactive workshops to the agenda – one on circular procurement and another to introduce the CIRCO training program. Attendees spent half a day diving deeper into these topics and taking learnings back to their organisations for implementation.

Throughout the conference sessions, we had a dedicated group of skilled rapporteurs who captured the key takeaways from each session to highlight the pivotal themes discussed throughout the event. Take a look at this year's conference key themes and takeaways which offer an overview of the cutting-edge dialogues that shaped the event. And take a listen to the audio recordings! Such great takeaways there, direct from the speakers!

Rapporteurs

A special thank you to our amazing rapporteurs this year:

- Eunice Quintana-Smark
- Jordan Roods
- Dr Agnes Toth-Peter
- Prof Roy Tasker

2024 KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS



Day 1

Circular economy in Australia is in its infancy, but starting to take small steps

- In comparison to the linear economy, circularity is small scale.
- To transition to a circular economy requires a fundamental change to how we currently extract resources, value add to produce goods that can be circulated at highest value for as long as possible, then choose how we manage them at end of use, and eventually, at end of life.
- This has not been the practice, so we need to showcase the small steps and bring as many people along as possible.
- Change needs to occur in all areas to make the circular transition a reality.

Systems thinking is critical yet absent

- Some solutions may seem to be helpful, but there is a critical need to use systems thinking and a holistic approach to avoid unintended consequences in the design and launch of circular solutions.
- Systems in which organisations function need to enable ecosystem design that promotes lasting outcomes.
- Resilient systems are needed to help us face both current and future changes in our society.

Harmonisation and standardisation

- Harmonisation between commonwealth and state and territory governments can support collaborative work.
- The finance sector is taking the lead on standardisation with the launch of the [Australian Sustainable Finance Taxonomy](#) to provide clear communication within and across borders.
- A global standard of circular economy taxonomy (such as the [ISO standard](#) released in 2024) was seen to help reduce confusion and support better investment, policy, and organisational decision making.
- Harmonisation and standardisation were seen to help transparency to make informed choices for purchasers (both company and individual).

Education is a key enabler

- A workforce that can support a transition to a circular economy needs education on what it is, the opportunities within it, and how to convince decision makers of both.
- Education and understanding are necessary to engage with and manage often the complex, fragmented market stakeholders with confidence.
- Capability building is a key focus of the new [Circular Economy Labs](#) from MSDI to develop new talent and future leaders in the circular economy.
- Transition brokers are an important actor in providing education and addressing skills gaps.

2024 KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

Day 1

Funding and innovation – filling the gaps

- The Principal Sponsored ANZ Finance Session, identified financing is available for circular economy innovation, but there is a gap in being able to scale said innovation.
- Strong cooperation between sectors, including banks, investors, businesses is needed to upscale innovation.
- Challenge-based funding could encourage circular innovation that aligns with the national framework – see below.

Collaboration is critical to the transition

- All sessions referenced collaboration as an important enabler of resource efficiency in a circular economy.
- Collaboration occurs across a spectrum – from simply co-operation to greater integration across stakeholders.
- Collaboration is needed in finance, policy, education, and in practice.
- Collaboration needs a change in mindset and to be functioning in an environment where it is safe to fail where champions of collaboration are celebrated.

“We have a collective responsibility to make changes as a society, where we are more interconnected and interdependent than ever”

– Dr Janez Potočnik

Progress is happening

- The CEMAG provided their reflections on the development of final recommendations to government, including a National Circular Economy Framework (launched 10 December 2024)
- Organisations are taking risks, testing the market and delivering successful business models with the right partners.
- The focus on decarbonisation is directing interest to circular solutions
- Through innovation in research, tools development, policy engagement and behaviour change – the stage is being set to scale circular economy solutions



2024 KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS



Day 2

Circularity could support rapid decarbonisation

- In the built environment sector, responsible for 40% of emissions globally, the adoption of circular design solutions could offer rapid decarbonisation.
- Improving the housing sector alone to include retrofitting, use of passive house principles, and design for disassembly can deliver potential climate benefits, beyond decarbonisation.

Innovation is happening!

- A key theme on day 2 was innovation – starting with the Innovation Pitch Fest sponsored by [Coles](#). Five organisations took part, with the winner, PV Industries announced at the end of Day 2. Congrats to James and the team!
- The second focused session on innovation was the [Sustainability Victoria](#) Principal Sponsor session, sharing examples of innovation funded by SV that engaged with industry for practical outcomes.
- There is value in learning from researchers and blending entrepreneurial and academic approaches to foster creativity and develop new solutions, to create innovation.
- Innovation is not just one company taking steps. It's about collaboration, different tools that include policy, yes, but it's also about connections, trialling, new business models, cutting-edge technologies, sharing stories of success and failure and be willing to give something a go.
- Listen to the session with SV to learn more about innovation through the lens of Pitch Perfect!

Practical experience is important

- Two workshops held on the morning of Day 2 ([Circular Procurement](#) and [CIRCO](#)) showed the high levels of interest in receiving practical, takeaways from the conference that could seed ideas in participants organisations.
- Circular procurement used by governments and large corporates can act as a catalyst a circular economy transition and in support of emerging products and services that need to build scale
- CIRCO training delivered a taster of the full 3-day workshop, diving straight into value chain analysis and identifying opportunities across a range of product lines.
- Practical experience can focus on highlighting opportunities in the products that are already made and sharing to inspire others.

Data systems can make circularity both practical impactful

- Several sessions addressed the issue of data – from a metrics perspective where measurements can inform material footprint calculations to set targets, to data gaps that can either help or hinder development of circular innovation.
- Australia's material footprint sits at 13 per cent, while the Netherlands sits at 30 per cent.
- Values based metrics that move beyond volumes of landfill diversion, for example fail to capture higher-order circular economy strategies.
- Data sharing and data protection can prevent collaboration, especially when combined with anti-competitive policies.

2024 KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

Day 2

Demand markets drive circularity

- In the aluminium session, it was evident that the decline of car makers in Australia had a direct impact on the ability for Australia to not only produce aluminium, but to also process scrap with some 460,000 tonnes of scrap exported last year. Without tolling mills, local recycling is challenging.
- On the other hand, in the product stewardship session, an industry wide approach to packaging with APCO, can incentivise circular practices.
- Seamless – clothing product stewardship scheme, has adopted an industry wide approach to imbued adoption for circular principles, now with over 70 brands signed up!
- However, no single product stewardship scheme can address all challenges – coordinated efforts are essential.

Collaboration and coordination continue to feature

- The example of the Circular Design Guidelines Project offered a practical example of guidelines developed, through a collaboration between industry and academia.
- The Circular Economy Business Innovation Centre (CEBIC) by SV has over the last four years supported businesses in a range of collaboration activities to drive the adoption of circular practices in Victoria.
- The collaborative approach highlights the importance of taking the entire supply chain on the journey to demonstrate the benefits of circular practices.

And for the future?

- Democratise the transparency of data so that every manufacturer can participate in data collection in a cost-effective way.
- Include planetary boundaries in the assessment process – don't just focus on carbon.
- Work on common language to bring everyone along on the journey.
- Transition brokers can help with the messy middle that is a transition to a circular economy – to help understand the system and the levers for change.
- Listen to the stories your kids do and take advice – Let it go; become a change maker today, not tomorrow; think about how things will impact our children.
- Encourage take one idea you learned today, make it happen tomorrow – one meeting, one new relationship, connections – do something tomorrow.



PLANET ARK & ACE HUB INITIATIVES

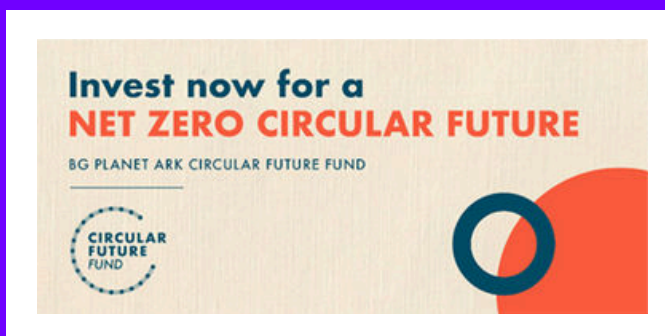


CIRCO Circular business design training

Want to know how to design circular economy solutions into your business? Register for the CIRCO Circular Business Design Workshop offered by the ACE Hub direct from the Netherlands. This circular economy training offers practical, action-based learning designed to give you immediate solutions. Register today at this [link](#).

Join the ACE Hub Portal!

The ACE Hub Portal is the online community guiding Australia's circular economy. Join the network of circular economy leaders fast-tracking our transition from a linear 'take, make, use, dispose' economy to a regenerative, circular one. Become a member to access knowledge and learnings. Find out more [here](#)!



Circular Future Fund

Planet Ark and Boston Global Group officially launched the Circular Future Fund (CFF), Australia's first dedicated circular economy investment fund focused on projects that enable the transition to a carbon neutral circular economy in Australia. The CFF is open for expressions of interest from investors and innovators who share the vision of a circular economy and a resilient future for the Australian economy.

For more information, click here: acehub.org.au

Product Stewardship Hub

If your industry or organisation wants to know about setting up a product stewardship scheme, reach out to Planet Ark's Product Stewardship Hub. Launched in 2023, the PS Hub has already supported multiple sectors to navigate the steps to establishing voluntary accredited schemes, as well as running its own programs such as 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark.' For more information, please reach out to pshub@planetark.org or visit planetark.org



CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND AUDIO RECORDINGS

View Circularity 2024's conference programme and click on the boxes below to access the audio recordings and conference slides.

DAY 1 | November 26



Circularity 2024

DAY 1 Cont.

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Circularity ANZ Sustainability Victoria VICTORIA

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Q&A Discussion

Keynote **Keynote** **Moderator**

Dr. Nicole Garofano Planet Ark & the ACE Hub
Dr. Janez Potočnik UNEP International Resource Panel
Prof. John Thwaites AM Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group, Commonwealth Centre

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Fireside chat: core ingredients for good collaboration

Keynote **Moderator**

Dr. John Butcher John Curtin Institute of Public Policy, Curtin University
Veena Sahajwalla Centre For Sustainable Materials Research & Technology, UNSW

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Enabling circular value chains through good design

Moderator

Pippa Corry Philo & Co
Jo-Ann Kellock Design Institute of Australia
Joshua Ellis Cultivated

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Financing the circular economy transition

Moderator

Holly Taylor ANZ Bank
Alana Hollestelle Common Capital
Christina Tonkin ANZ Bank
Heath Warman Boston Global
Martijn Wilder Pullinaton

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Circularity MONASH UNIVERSITY MONASH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Keynote Sponsor

Circular Economy Labs - Accelerating circular Economy transitions and behaviour change

Keynote **Moderator**

Martin Geissdoerfer Circular Economy Labs, Monash Sustainable Development Institute
Jennifer Macklin Monash Sustainable Development Institute
Courtney Holm A.BCH World
Lachlan Feggans Brambles

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Closing address - reflections of the day

Adam Culley Planet Ark Environmental Foundation

Circularity ²⁰²⁴

DAY 2 | November 27

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Welcome to Day 2 of Circularity

Brooke Donnelly
Chair - ACE Hub Advisory Board, Coles Group

George Osborne
Deputy Chair - ACE Hub Advisory Board, Home City Council

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Keynote address by the Hon. Matt Kean

Keynote

Hon. Matt Kean
Climate Change Authority & Western Capital

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Innovation Sponsor
coles

2024 Innovation Pitch Fest

Andrea Polson
Licella

Hannah Arkell
Packamama

Tim Lee
U by Utilitarian

James Petesic
PV Industries

Jean-Francois Roiron
Koor

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Measuring for a circular economy

Keynote

Heinz Schandl
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

Ben dan Velden
Deloitte

Kat Heinrich
Revelis

Kate Noble
Sustainability Victoria

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Adopting circularity to create thriving urban places

MC

Keynote

Maria Atkinson
MAC

Tuba Kocaturk
Deakin University, School of Architecture & Built Environment

Cathy Inglis
Think Brick Australia

Joe Karten
Bulk Pty Ltd.

Lucy Sharman
Bradfield Development Authority

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Global collaboration for a circular aluminium industry

Keynote

Ashleigh Morris
COREO

Luke Hawkins
Capral Aluminium

Marghanita Johnson
Australian Aluminium Council

Pete Forakis
Rio Tinto Aluminium

2024 Circularity

DAY 2 Cont.

2024
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Creating circular clothing value chains

Keynote
Ainsley Simpson
Seamless

Moderator
Julie Boulton
Julie Boulton Strategy and Sustainability

Alice Payne
RMIT University

Courtney Holm
ABC World

Erika Martin
Country Road Group

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Circular economy in 2034: what are the opportunities?

Moderator
Usha Iyer-Raniga
RMIT University

Dr. Helen Lewis
thinktap-anz

Jonas Bengtsson
Edge Impact

Tania Hyde
BECA Limited

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Sustainability Victoria VICTORIA

Unlocking opportunity: innovating for a circular economy

Keynote
Gwyneth Elsum
Sustainability Victoria

Keynote
Aleasha McCallion
Monash Sustainable Development Institute

Jodie Bricout
Aurecon

Julie Bouton
Julie Boulton Strategy and Sustainability

Paul Sparks
Cradem

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Circularity 2024: closing remarks

Moderator
Maria Atkinson
MAC

Adam Culley
Planet Ark

Caitlyn Brooksbank
Coles Group





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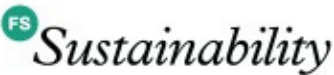
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