

IP05.2.03: Regional and Remote Circular Economy Governance Project (2025-2026)

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Presentation overview

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Presentation outline:

- *Project Overview*
- *Initial impressions from first case study data collection*
- *EMCR Impact*
- *Question*

Project overview



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Project overview

Why:

- Regional and remote communities face distinct challenges in translating circular economy ambition into sustained, scalable action.

What:

- Examines how governance arrangements, partnerships and local capabilities shape the success of circular economy initiatives in regional and remote Australia.
- Generate practical, evidence-based guidance that helps governments, regional organisations and intermediaries design more effective support for place-based circular economy transitions.



Project overview

Who benefits:

- Place-based CE collaboration stakeholders (businesses, councils, NGOs, other organisations and individuals).
- State and national government entities seeking to support CE initiatives.
- Researchers in other, similar jurisdictions.



Activities and planned outputs

- **Activities (action):**

- Mapping and selection of case studies.
- Case documentation (interviews, document review).
- Survey.
- Comparative analysis of cases (using fsQCA).
- Adaptive engagement with participants to validate findings (via focus groups).

- **Outputs (action):**

- A capstone national report.
- Updated survey report.
- Journal submissions.
- Other knowledge translation resources including policy briefs, webinars, visual summaries for the Hub website.



Anticipated outcomes

For governments:

- Evidence-supported recommendations about policies, funding approaches, and other enabling conditions that would support the scaling and mainstreaming of place-based CE collaborations.

For regional organisations and councils:

- Practical examples of and strategies for developing locally appropriate governance approaches.

For research and practice:

- Contributions to knowledge about:
 - The unique challenges faced by regional and remote CE initiatives in Australia.
 - Insights into how multi-level fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis can be used for similar analyses.



Anticipated impacts

For governments:

- Clearer evidence on how to design place-based CE support mechanisms that work across diverse regional contexts.

For regional organisations and councils:

- Insights into governance models and partnerships that improve the likelihood of success.

For the national CE agenda:

- Stronger alignment between local innovation and national framework implementation.

For research and practice:

- Improved methods for analysing complex, context-dependent sustainability transitions.

Hunter valley case study reflections



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Pilot case study – Hunter Valley

- In Dec 2025, completed 9 interviews with
 - Brokers
 - Initiatives/Businesses
- Piloting method for use with fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA)
 - Based on pilot, will modestly adjust methods to
 - Differentiate more between brokers and initiatives
 - Expand the fsQCA questions



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Hunter valley impressions - 1



To what extent do regional and remote CE collaborations emerge organically, and why or why not?

- Majority of initiative level work emerged based on informal relationships.
- Brokers play particularly key roles in scaling and mainstreaming, especially when providing connections to investment and/or business or scientific expertise.

What are key factors for progressing beyond a pilot stage?

- Clear business model focused on a narrow range of materials/products
- Close relationships with clients, suppliers and other “fellow travellers”

Hunter valley impressions - 2



What are key challenges for scaling or mainstreaming?

- Scale, time horizon, and parameters of grants are particularly limiting.
- Investment culture that is risk averse or seeking rapid ROI.

Which roles, stakeholders and governance configurations help.

- Brokers were mentioned as convening events and making one-to-one linkages that might not otherwise arise.
- Accelerator and mentorship programs were vital to overcoming barriers to scaling.
- Universities/researchers were mentioned as undertaking key services/ R&D functions at critical moments.



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Looking forward

Upcoming cases:

- Gippsland
- Barwon Southwest
- Murraylands and Riverland
- Two WA locations under consideration



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EMCR Impact



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Impact of EMCRs on project

Having recently started, no impacts to report at this time.

EMCR career impact

EMCR will be reconnecting with inquires about collaboration to address complex social problems, as well as learning new skills for fsQCA.

EMCR future directions: Exploring how national and state policies and funding can create enabling conditions for young adults to select educational and employment pathways for a thriving CE in Australia, in particular, in regional and remote contexts with declining industries.

Thank you - Questions



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