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59 Bonville Avenue | PO Box 3137 | Thornton NSW 2322
P (02) 4978 4040 | F (02) 4966 0588

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Region ready to drive change in rethinking waste

Hunter Joint Organisation (HJO), with funding support from the NSW State Government, are rethinking waste and resource recovery in a bid to help transition the Hunter Central Coast region to a circular economy.

A circular economy aims to maximise the value of resources by keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible. Circular systems employ reuse, sharing, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling to create close-loop systems, minimising the creation of waste, pollution and carbon emissions.

Hunter Joint Organisation, along with its member councils, is investing time and resources in an effort to drive innovation into ecological waste management practices and more sustainable industries based on circular economy principles, which will translate to more jobs and better environmental outcomes for the region. "The Hunter Joint Organisation is committed to creating a network of stakeholders across government, industry, research organisations and communities to find innovative solutions to reuse waste materials and enhance sustainability," Bob Pynsent, Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation, and Mayor of Cessnock City Council said.

"The world's economy has always been a take, make and dispose system," Kay Fraser, Mayor of Lake Macquarie City Council, and Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation's Circular Economy Sub-Committee adds, "however the circular economy message is starting to resonate. Waste is a valuable resource that could be reused, reengineered and reimaged using circular economy principles. Just because a product isn't useful anymore doesn't mean the material it's made of can't be used. Through continued use and reuse we will reduce both the need for raw materials, minimize the accumulation of waste and capture maximum value from our resources."

To support the region toward a truly circular economy approach in line with NSW and Commonwealth Government directions, the Hunter JO, with funding support from the NSW State Government has recently completed two important foundational projects – the Hunter Central Coast Material Flow Analysis and Hunter Central Coast Ecosystem project.



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Hunter Central Coast Material Flow Analysis Project

The material flow analysis developed by the Hunter JO and NSW Government's Sustainability Advantage Program, maps the quantity of 21 different waste materials across each local government area in the Hunter and Central Coast. This will provide a baseline of waste material flows across the region, that can be used by government and business to identify opportunities for collaboration and investment.

"Having this data available is the first step in understanding where waste materials are located in the Hunter and Central Coast. It is also a great example of what collaboration can achieve for our region" Rob Thomson, Senior Team Leader, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Sustainability Advantage said.

"We support the Hunter Central Coast region moving to a circular economy as it will provide long-term economic, social and environmental benefits. The transition will enhance the environment, increase the robustness of the economy by creating new markets and jobs, increase accessibility to goods, maximise the value of resources, reduce waste and improve how we use resources." Rob Thomson said.

The Hunter Central Coast Material Flow Analysis is available upon request by contacting Jonathan Wood, Senior Project Officer, Sustainability Advantage, P: (02) 4927 3285 E: jonathan.wood@environment.nsw.gov.au

Hunter Central Coast Ecosystem Report

The Hunter is already home to innovative business and government initiatives that are leading examples of circular economy principles in action. The Hunter Central Coast Ecosystem report provides a status report on our region's Circular Economy 'eco-system', as it relates to waste streams and resource recovery.

The report showcases what is already happening in the region and what some of the next steps are to further the region's Circular Economy.



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“This is just the beginning” Bob Pynsent, Chair of the Hunter Joint Organisation, and Mayor of Cessnock City Council said “We want everyone across government, business, community and tertiary education sectors to engage with the eco-system. By collaborating we can help develop the region’s economy and drive environmental improvement at the same time.”

The report details several case studies of businesses and local government’s already demonstrating circular economy principles in action. To view the report please go to: <https://www.hunterjo.com.au/projects/hunter-circular/>

Using circular economy principles to help grow our region and provide great economic and environmental benefits is a well trodden path in many European regions. These projects represent the start of an exciting new period that will help position the Hunter Central Coast as national leaders in the Circular Economy field.

The next stage of the project will see the findings presented in an online resource. The new hunter circular website is designed to be the centrepiece of engagement in order to help the Circular Economy grow in the Hunter and Central Coast region.

For more information please contact:

Tim Askew

Regional Program Manager | Environment Division

Hunter Joint Organisation

59 Bonville Avenue (PO Box 3137) THORNTON NSW 2322

P: (02) 4978 4034 | M: 0436 420 623

E: tima@hunterjo.com.au | www.hccrems.com.au

Jonathan Wood

Senior Project Officer, Sustainability Advantage

Climate Change & Sustainability | Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

T 02 4927 3285 | E jonathan.wood@environment.nsw.gov.au

Level 4, 26 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle 2300



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Rob Thomson

Senior Team Leader

Sustainability Advantage

Climate Change & Sustainability

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

T 02 9895 6518 | M 0437 675 064 | E rob.thomson@environment.nsw.gov.au

www.dpie.nsw.gov.au

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