

Shovel Ready:

Circular Economy Projects in Auckland

For recovery, re-employment and resilience

Investing \$1.6 million now will ensure Auckland can provide support for business, reduce environmental impact, create and retain jobs, and reduce waste to landfill.

This will be delivering on the circular economy principles identified in ATEED & SBN's Circular Opportunities for Auckland Report in 2018. This found that if established in 2030 a circular economy for Auckland could yield \$8.8 billion in additional economic activity and reduce carbon emissions by 2,700 ktCO₂e.¹

Making this investment now will set the city up to realise that value. It will signal the circular economy as a driving force for city recovery and ongoing resilience. It will put positive results into the 2020 financial year. It will be central to building a better more resilient economy in the wake of the Covid19 pandemic.

Investing another \$50 million into partnerships will see more than one million trees planted. It will create new employment for the vulnerable unemployed, improve regional wellbeing and put Auckland on the C40's map as a beacon resilient, low carbon cities embracing the circular economy.

The Circular Economy Accelerator (CEA) is a project of the Sustainable Business Network (SBN). SBN has more than 600 business members throughout the country and more than 16 years' experience in business resilience and sustainability.

The CEA proposes the following projects for immediate activation.

1 The Underused Assets Register

The economic slowdown has left a huge range of assets under used, stranded or entirely abandoned all over the city. This is especially true in the hard-hit tourism and hospitality sectors. These assets include staff, raw materials, tools, equipment and vehicles, as well as production, distribution and storage facilities. An online register of these assets could rapidly facilitate asset sharing and redeployment to optimise and maximise their use.

This would:

- cut waste that would otherwise be left on sites or sent to landfill
- accelerate recovery of economic activity and employment
- provide businesses with cost-cutting options to maintain their activities during the rebuild
- share innovations and solutions for low cost, low waste business in leaner times
- provide low cost entry opportunities for new businesses able to utilise assets that would otherwise be left abandoned
- provide much needed support for mutually supportive business interactions during the difficult recovery phase

Assessment of existing platforms (e.g. CivilShare) will identify the most appropriate ones to learn from and expand on.

Required Investment: \$150,000 - \$500,000 (pending flexibility of existing platforms)

2 Support capability building for business resiliency via support resources

SBN has created a comprehensive set of business sustainability, efficiency and resilience resources² that would greatly benefit a wider audience. They include easy to use practical guides covering waste, energy efficiency, transport, procurement and more.

We recognise that these are currently needed beyond our membership, and so have made them open access. But for the maximum number of businesses to benefit from them, we need support for marketing and further development.

There is also a need to fast track the development of a Circular Economy Guide to get the benefits of further establishing this as best practise in the region's businesses. This could be produced within 21 days and be ready for use, alongside one to one individual advice, to support SMEs in their recovery and reset into the new conditions.

Required Investment: \$300,000 (to publish and roll out an accompanying support programme)

3 A National Centre for Reuse and Remanufacture

SBN has been seeding this idea for several years, working with partners in major businesses along with partners in academic and tertiary education institutions.

The intention is to create a world leading research, development and deployment centre for reuse and remanufacture of products and materials into new products and materials. This is also intended to inform product design and manufacture in New Zealand to install circular economies and radically reduce waste.

Based at a university or similar tertiary institution, the Centre will produce research, host capability training events and provide a forum and support for shared innovation.

It will:

- identify additional employment opportunities from material reuse and recovery
- contribute to reductions in landfill and greenhouse gas emissions
- directly support business innovations in a resource constrained economy
- build business capability and increase local supply chain options

Required Investment: \$500,000 (for technical roles, pipeline development and education services)

4 Local supplier connection platform for SMEs

Critical cash flow and long distance supply chain vulnerabilities mean that small and medium sized enterprises will be among the worst affected in the current slowdown. It is vital to support the establishment of mutual support networks, where SMEs can meet new localised supply chain requirements and connect to local procurers.

This will:

- connect local businesses to opportunities and identify associated capability building requirements needed to meet them
- provide increased market opportunities for solutions emerging from Centre for Reuse and Remanufacturing
- install greater resilience to the current conditions in recovering SMEs
- allow easier access to vital local business to business services, including cleaning and waste management
- stimulate local business opportunities and employment
- support / amplify existing social and sustainable procurement initiatives

Required Investment: \$300,000

5 Support for Employment in the Regenerative Circular Economy

The full economic impact of the pandemic, particularly on employment, is yet to be felt. What is already clear is in the coming months the Auckland region will urgently need additional resilient employment opportunities that match the new conditions. They will be needed, in part, to absorb significant job losses in affected sectors. At the same time there remains an urgent need to advance waste minimisation and environmental restoration across the region. This is reflected in Auckland Council's current plans and targets, as well as those of the national government.

An example of how this challenge can be met is in the proposed partnership in the Auckland region between the Sustainable Business Network, Te Whangai Trust and Nga Uri O Hau. This proposes a \$22.5 million investment that will create 50 new jobs and plant 750,000 plants and trees in key waterway restoration projects throughout the region this winter.

In addition, SBN is in discussions with Kāinga Ora for a possible urban restoration partnership linked to NZ Housing, initially in Otara. This project is currently in design, but could scale to a \$25 million investment that will yield direct social and wellbeing benefits to the local community, along with ecological benefits and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

We would also recommend using these partnership models in support of the regional employment generated by the Department of Conservation's national co-ordination of the Partnering to Plant environmental restoration programme.

Required Investment: \$25,000,000

(For more detailed information on these proposals, please refer to the attached proposal to Crown Infrastructure Partners).

The circular economy holds the key to Auckland recovery and success. Now is the time to be bold in that transition.

Detailed proposals are available on request. If you would like to discuss any of these ideas further please contact rachel@sustainable.org.nz or call: 021 686 158.

¹

https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/3320613/Circular%20Economy%20Reports/SBN_CircularEconomyOpportunity_ForAuckland.pdf

² <https://sustainable.org.nz/sustainable-tools-resources/>