

# Circular Economy Policy Fact Sheet

## July 2019

### About

The Victorian Government is developing a circular economy policy and action plan for Victoria to be released late 2019. In a circular economy, people minimise waste and make the most of resources. Shifting to a more circular economy will grow the economy, increase jobs and reduce impacts on the environment.

The circular economy policy will build on Victoria's leading waste and resource recovery initiatives and respond to global recycling market challenges. More than that, it will examine new ways for Victorian businesses and communities to reduce waste in all stages of making, using and disposing of the products and infrastructure we rely on every day.

*We want to hear from all businesses, communities, councils and households – what are your views on shifting to a more circular Victorian economy?*

The circular economy policy will:

- identify opportunities for Victorians to reduce waste and create more value from fewer resources
- establish goals for the waste and resource recovery system, and clarify the role of waste to energy technologies in that system
- provide long-term direction and certainty for Victorian businesses so they can confidently invest to improve productivity and maintain national and global competitiveness.

### What is a circular economy?

There is no single, universally agreed definition of circular economy. For the purposes of this consultation, the Victorian Government has adopted the following definition.

*A circular economy continually seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of production and consumption and gain more productive use from natural resources.*

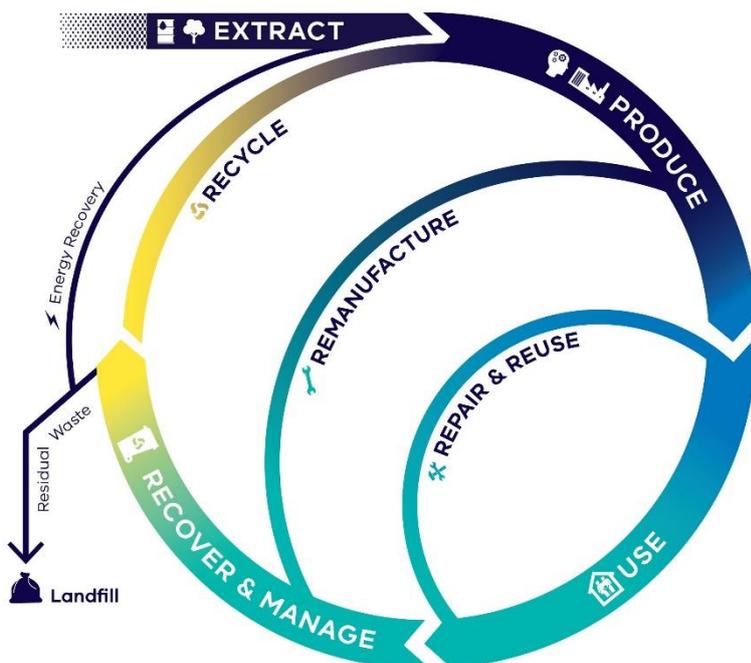
*Resource use is minimised, and waste and pollution are avoided with good design and efficient practices. This reduces environmental impacts while maintaining or increasing the value people obtain from goods and services.*

*Products are designed so that they are durable and can be readily repaired, reused and recycled at the end of their lives.*

*Business models encourage intense and efficient product use, like sharing products between multiple users, or supplying a product as a service that includes maintenance, repair and disposal.*

*Innovations to increase resource productivity bring a range of benefits including jobs, growth and social inclusion to local, regional and global economies.*

#### A circular economy for Victoria



## Background

### Responding to global recycling issues

In January 2018, China imposed strict quality standards on the import of recyclable materials, including paper and plastic. This had substantial impacts on global recycling systems and markets — including Victoria's.

In July 2018 the Victorian Government released the [Recycling Industry Strategic Plan](#), which provides a blueprint for a safe, resilient and efficient recycling system in Victoria. The implementation of the plan is supported by a \$37 million package of initiatives that will be delivered over three years. The development of a circular economy policy and action plan by 2020 is an action under this plan.

### Addressing environmental impacts

The production, consumption and disposal of products and infrastructure has environmental and social impacts e.g. various types of pollution to soil, water and air (including greenhouse gas emissions), and amenity impacts like litter, noise and odour. Finding ways to design products differently, use materials more efficiently, reduce waste and recover resources can minimise environmental and social impacts.

### Global trends

Governments around the world are making the shift to a more circular global economy, and many businesses are employing circular economy principles. Responding to this is important for Victoria's international competitiveness.

The circular economy has become a mainstream focus for industry development, resource security and waste and resource recovery policies around the world. The European Union has taken a strong lead with *Closing the loop* - an EU action plan for a circular economy, supported by national strategies in Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Slovenia.

In 2018 Australian environment ministers agreed to a revised National Waste Policy based on circular economy principles. Victoria will continue to work with other jurisdictions to implement the policy. Other Australian states, including New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland, are also investigating the circular economy.

## More information

For more information go to [engage.vic.gov.au/circulareconomy](http://engage.vic.gov.au/circulareconomy) or [environment.vic.gov.au](http://environment.vic.gov.au) If you have any queries email [circulareconomy@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:circulareconomy@delwp.vic.gov.au) or phone our Circular Economy Policy Team on 136 186.

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