



REUSE IS THE ROAD TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- **Behaviour Change Campaign for Good Stewardship**
- **Accessible Reuse and Repair Grant Funding**
- **Tax Incentives for Brands to Donate Excess Stock to Charity**

Charitable Recycling Australia represents Australia's reuse and op shops to champion the Circular Economy for a sustainable environment and an equitable society.

The charitable reuse sector diverts over a million tonnes of household items from landfill, saves 880,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions and raises almost a billion dollars a year for social good.

All of Australia's major charity shops are members of Charitable Recycling Australia including Salvos, Vinnies, Red Cross, Save the Children, Lifeline and dozens of others representing around 95% of the volume of the sector. The charitable reuse sector has been operating under circular economy principles for over 140 years since the first charity shop was established in Australia in the 1880s.

All of the major commercial collections partners of charities are also included in the Charitable Recycling Australia community including King Cotton, Statewide, Recycle Care Australia, SCR Group, One Ten, Rais Industries, SAP Impex and Navarro Enterprises.

The Charitable Recycling Australia community also includes sustainability organisations like Planet Ark, Clean Up Australia, ANZRP, Good 360, Thread Together, ReGroup and TOMRA Cleanaway, as well as second-hand economy players like eBay.

Charitable Recycling Australia is a catalyst for circular economy behaviour change, and acts as a broker with other stakeholders essential to the Circular Economy.

[MEMBERS](#) | [SUPPORTERS](#) | [PARTNERS](#)

3 POLICY INTERVENTIONS TO ACCELERATE CIRCULARITY

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGN

Behaviour change is fundamental to the transition to the Circular Economy, and there is an opportunity for the Australian Government to take on an education role with Australian consumers and businesses to encourage behaviours at the top of the Waste Hierarchy.

What will the Behaviour Change Campaign include?

- Responsible donating messages to encourage consumers to donate pre-loved goods to charity, with its 86% resource recovery rate and where the products will get reused.
- Good stewardship messages to underpin current and future National Product Stewardship Investment Fund Programs, through sustainability and environmental impact.
- Education and advice for consumers on how to best care for products, prolong their life and how to dispose responsibly – aligned with Circular Economy principles.
- Encouragement for clothing and household brands to donate excess stock to charity for (first) use/reuse.

What will it do?

- Begin the transition for 'consumers' to becoming 'citizen consumers' with a deeper understanding of the environmental and social costs of their purchase and disposal decisions.

How much will it cost?

- Recently, the Government invested a \$3 million national advertising campaign to boost volunteers nationally – a similar investment will kickstart the essential behaviour change that is essential for the transition to a Circular Economy by 2030.

ACCESSIBLE REUSE & REPAIR GRANTS

Most government funding goes to recycling at the bottom of the Waste Hierarchy, artificially inflating its role. Funding for continuous improvement is overlooked, and absent from sectors like reuse, which have already created massive social, environmental and economic impact – and can deliver benefits that can be scaled.

What will this include?

- Funding for physical space and manpower, including wage subsidies, to scale preparation for reuse and maximise waste diversion.
- Incentives to support collections and sorting of reusable clothing and household items.
- Easily accessible repair hubs for communities within their council areas.
- Training and upskilling support for the job creation of people facing barriers.

What will it do?

- Increase the volume and impact of Reuse in Australia as a key driver of the transition to a Circular Economy by 2030.
- Provide a short to medium term accelerator boost to scale reuse and build capacity for sustained ongoing improvement and impact for reuse organisations.

How much will it cost?

- Costs will be linked directly to specific, measurable environmental, social and economic impacts linked to the data population of the Monash University National Reuse Measurement Guidelines.
- The first datasets will become available in mid 2024, to enable a clear Cost-Benefit analysis of any grant or policy interventions to scale reuse in Australia.

TAX INCENTIVES FOR BRANDS TO DONATE TO CHARITY

A Deloitte Access Economics Report for Good360 estimates that \$2.5 billion worth of new products are wasted and are never used, reflecting the overproduction of excess stock by clothing and household brands. There is an opportunity for the Government to encourage transparency and encourage the donation of unused, excess pre-consumer goods to the charitable sector where they will get used and contribute to the Circular Economy with environmental, social and economic gains.

What will this include?

- A Working Group to explore business tax incentives to encourage the donations of clothing and household items, expanding on the proposed tax incentive for food relief.
- The encouragement of transparency and visibility from brands to declare excess stock inventories and take responsibility for the waste they generate.
- Education and messaging to encourage the resale (reuse) of unsold excess stock through reuse and op shops in Australia.
- Government funding for a Cost-Benefit Analysis on the tax architecture required.

What will it do?

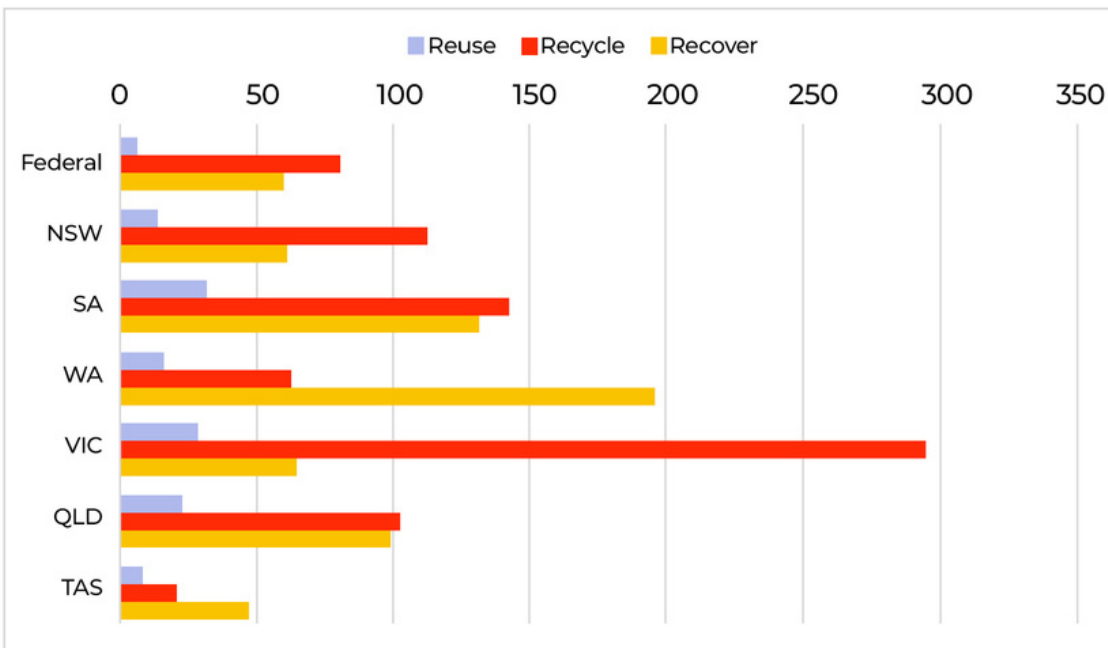
- Address the critical, hidden problem of overproduction and excess stock waste that is the nemesis of the Circular Economy.
- Maximise the value of resources in existing new products, to give them a first and second life through op shops and generate social and environmental benefits.
- Actively engage the Next Generation of consumers who are increasingly demanding environmental sustainability from household brands.
- Encourage active ESG awareness and reporting.

How much will it cost?

- TBC dependent on the scope of the Cost-Benefit Analysis

BENEFITS FOR GOVERNMENT

Reuse sits at the top of the Waste Hierarchy as a highest and best use intervention and yet it is unsupported by Australian Government waste policies. An independent gap analysis of Australian Government policies through the lens of the Waste Hierarchy and Circular Economy principles demonstrates the current limited focus on the bottom of the Hierarchy like Recycle and Recover.



The benefit for the Australian Government is simple. We all know the Waste Hierarchy establishes preferred priorities based on efficacy. So the more higher order interventions like Reuse are actioned, the more effective the outcomes. The better the outcomes, the faster the Australian Government will reach its targets and accelerate its progress towards a Circular Economy by 2030. The faster we reach our targets - whether it is zero waste, CO₂ emission reductions or better resource management, the closer we get to a Circular Economy.

And if we do that, we will create a sustainable and prosperous future for Australia. And it starts with working higher up the Waste Hierarchy.

What is Reuse?

Reuse is defined as the recirculation of fit-for-purpose goods in their original form to extend their life for as long as possible, extracting full value from these resources for maximum environmental, social and economic impact.

It includes outputs such as waste diversion, landfill reduction, avoidance, good stewardship, and the reduction of CO₂ emissions, energy and water, through the displacement of a new like-for-like purchase. Adhering to the tenets of the Waste Hierarchy, Reuse also delays the need for recycling until products have reached the end of their useful lives.

Repair is a subset of Reuse, and this activity can also be defined as 'Preparation for Reuse', with Repair acting alongside Reuse to prolong the useful life of products.

Benefits for Treasury

Job Creation

The Australian Government data from Access Economics on the DCCEEW website highlights 9.2 jobs in Recycling compared to 2.8 jobs in Landfill per 10,000 tonnes. But what about Reuse?

MRA Consulting's Charitable Impact Report estimates 52 jobs per 10,000 tonnes based on a sample of 51% of Charitable Recycling Australia members. That's over five times as many jobs in Reuse than Recycling, which makes sense given Reuse sits much higher on the Waste Hierarchy as a preferred priority based on sustainability.



[Charitable Impact](#)

The newly announced NSW EPA Sustainability Partnership Study with Charitable Recycling Australia will comprehensively define how many jobs are created through Reuse in NSW, when the data is collected from all reuse organisations in the state.



[Measuring Reuse & Repair in NSW](#)

In economies like Europe where Reuse is actively supported to maximise impact by European Governments, RREUSE estimates that 700 jobs are created for every 10,000 tonnes materials reused. RREUSE estimates that an additional 300,000 new jobs can be created in Europe through Reuse Targets.



[Job Creation in the Reuse Sector](#)

Social Benefits

Beyond job creation for the Circular Economy, the biggest benefit for the Australian Government to support Reuse is the social impact it will create for Australia, and the millions of Australians in need. During this time of economic challenges, where many Australians are struggling with mortgage stress, rent payments and even household electricity bills – supporting Reuse can massively amplify the billion dollars a year that reuse charities generate to support those in need, through essential services like food, shelter, crisis support, mental health, and a wide range of illness and disability support. Plus the supply of over 200 million low-cost pre-loved household items through the network of 3,000+ reuse and op shops to serve those with low incomes get the product that their families need every year.

The billion dollars a year raised by reuse charities also serves as avoided costs for the Government.

National Reuse Measurement Guidelines

Today, following ground-breaking research from Monash University, Australia can effectively measure reuse and articulate its triple bottom line benefits, through the National Reuse Measurement Guidelines, which provide a comprehensive methodology to measure reuse (through POS) and quantify its environmental, economic and social benefits.

In the Monash University approach, reuse will be measured at the point of sale, which captures information about the quantity of items resold, the category of items, and their cost – and allows for the interpretation of data into average weights per category, average material composition and product life cycle assessments that are readily available.

Using this data and other reporting as outlined in the framework, it is now possible to demonstrate the social, environmental and economic impacts of reuse, including:

- Avoided virgin material consumption and greenhouse gas emissions savings
- Employment and volunteer opportunities – in a high job creation sector including scaling jobs for people facing barriers
- Skills development and work-readiness support – to capture the additional supports the charitable sector provides over and above typical training, to integrate people facing barriers
- Education and community engagement – to capture reuse workshops, events and training
- Total value of reused goods sold in the charitable and community reuse sector each year
- Total value of goods provided for welfare and in-kind to other organisations

Funding this data study nationally will provide the Australian Government with the evidence base to support Reuse, by quantifying its specific Environmental, Social and Economic benefits so that it can be aligned with commensurate Reuse Policy and Reuse Targets.

HELPFUL LINKS



[Government Policy Gap Analysis](#)



[Reuse Immersive](#)



[National Reuse Measurement Guidelines](#)



[Resource & Waste Hierarchy](#)



[Highest & Best Use Codesign Partnership](#)