

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY HUB INTEGRATION REPORT

How circular economy hubs can compound impact  
through increased collaboration



VICTORIAN  
CIRCULAR

*activator*

# Foreword

Compared to other parts of the world and specifically the EU, Australia's circular economy (CE) journey is just beginning. That said, the momentum and energy on CE is building quickly and gaining momentum. Although understanding of CE may not be consistent, there is a commitment to recognise that technical and biological loops need to be closed, waste needs to be eliminated and natural cycles restored/regenerated in the continent. It has also been clear that there needs to be more focus on local, due to disruptions in global supply chains especially during the pandemic. This offers Australia a clear opportunity.

Circular outcomes cannot be realised without collaboration. CE innovation hubs can become exemplars and lead the way to show business, community, and government on how alliances may occur across actors with win-win outcomes. Open and transparent relationships build trust. Such associations may be nurtured to support place-based responses so we can all learn together and avoid making similar mistakes. Innovation hubs can play a critical role in bringing actors together and catalysing CE outcomes. To do this, the hubs need to connect, engage, facilitate, and nurture circular outcomes with each other and related actors; in other words, they need to and 'walk the talk'.



**Prof. Usha Iyer-Raniga**

Director of the Victorian Circular Activator  
RMIT University

CE Hubs have an important role to play in building and empowering a community of actors capable of accelerating the transition towards a circular economy. Over the past few years, it has been promising to see several CE-focused hubs established that are actively bringing stakeholders together to collaborate and coordinate in ways that address the many barriers to our transition.

The scale of change we need to achieve in the next decade calls for hubs to further align efforts, share learnings, and amplify the call for action. It is exciting to imagine what we can achieve with this scale

of collaboration and synergy between hubs, who together are establishing a coalition of the willing.



**Matt Genever**

Interim CEO  
Sustainability Victoria

# Foreword

When Planet Ark launched the Australian Circular Economy Hub (ACE Hub) during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was obvious digital interactions needed to be the focus. Physical events have since been added to generate new opportunities for collaboration in the circular economy ecosystem in Australia.

The ACE Hub experience resonates with the findings in this report. Both digital and physical experiences are needed to gain momentum and facilitate the circular economy transition. Digital experiences can provide information and knowledge sharing and networking opportunities. The example of the ACE Hub Portal shows there is a role in digital spaces continuing to strengthen national online collaboration and relationship generating. Physical interaction can both solidify relationships built online and provide hands on knowledge exchange and practical action opportunities.

It is clear, physical spaces are critical in building on digital foundations. Both avenues need support. The ACE Hub looks forward to continuing and growing collaboration with the hubs across Australia and globally to accelerate the adoption of circular economy business models by all businesses, governments, and the community.



**Paul Klymenko**

CEO

Planet Ark Environmental Foundation

# Executive Summary

**Australia's transition towards a circular economy (CE) is well underway.** Over the past decade Australia and the World have experienced an explosion of bottom up momentum for a number of sustainable development related themes. The swell of support for CE has developed from a handful of niche initiatives to a movement for systemic change: bottom-up, top-down and everything in between.

This sudden increase in momentum is largely thanks to the emergence of CE themed hubs that work to raise awareness and facilitate the needed collaboration by bringing people together in a variety of ways to catalyse and scale CE initiatives.

This report aims to support these CE hubs by:

- **Increasing the conceptual understanding of CE hubs and collaboration**
- **Providing practical opportunities to better integrate CE content and engagement opportunities between CE hubs.**

This report undertook a combination of desktop research, interviews with CE hub leaders from across the country, and co-design sessions with the project team. Through this process the report found that there was a strong recognition of the need for improved collaboration/integration/coordination between the various CE hubs, as well as a strong sense of willingness to collectively improve this over time.

The report provided three key deliverables in support of increasing the conceptual understanding of CE hubs:

1. **5 values of a CE hub** (Pages 14-15)
2. **3 levels of activity and the physical-digital spectrum** (Pages 17-19)
3. **6 principles for collaboration** (Page 25-26)

The report also provided two tables of tangible integration opportunities for CE content and engagement (Pages 28-29), as well as four key recommendations for further action by CE hubs and Government (Page 30):

1. **CE hubs need to focus on getting CE to go viral**
2. **Governments should adequately fund Transition Brokers**
3. **CE hubs should commit to, and report on integration initiatives**
4. **CE hubs should improve storytelling of successful collaborations**

The project team hopes that this report can serve as a reference for further work in the pursuit of enhanced collaboration between CE hubs, as well as an invitation to collaborate.

# Acknowledgements

This report is funded as part of the Victorian Circular Activator (VCA) project that is supported by the Victorian Government's Recycling Victoria Innovation Fund as part of the Circular Economy Business Innovation Centre.

We would like to acknowledge all Australians that are actively working to collaboratively transition our economy to a circular economy.

## **Lead Author:**

Sean Trewick - Circular Citizen on behalf of Circular Economy Victoria

## **Contributing Authors:**

Jane Horvath - Australian Circular Economy Hub (Planet Ark)

Nicole Garofano - Australian Circular Economy Hub (Planet Ark)

## **Supported by:**

Ian Wong - Circular Economy Victoria

Tamanna Wadhvani - Australian Circular Economy Hub (Planet Ark)

## **Interview Collaborators:**

Alana Smith - LGPRO Special Interest Group Circular Economy (City of Boroondara)

Scott Bryant - LGPRO Special Interest Group Circular Economy (City of Bendigo)

Tim Askew - Hunter & Central Coast Circular (Hunter Joint Organisation)

Eloise Lobsey - Hunter & Central Coast Circular (Hunter Joint Organisation)

Debbie O'Byrne - Circular Economy Living Lab

Emily Adamson - Circular Economy Business Innovation Centre (SV)

George Osborne - Circular Economy Business Network (Hume City Council)

Chelsea McLean - Circular Economy Pioneers

Daniel Lancefield - Victorian Cleantech Cluster

Liz Smith - Circular Economy Huon

Usha Iyer-Raniga - Circular Economy Hub (RMIT University)

Dylan Hegh - Circular Economy Initiative (Deakin University)

Annie Jiang - Go Circular

Marcus Geisler - Circular Economy Western Australia (EMRC)

Aubrey Thomas - Green Industries SA

Veronica James - Green Industries SA

Amy Churchouse - Good Karma Effect

Sally Quinn - Green Collect

Vaissy Dasler - Nourishing Neighbours

The project team is grateful to everyone that had the capacity to contribute to this report and we look forward to continue to build on this work in an ever more collaborative way in the future.

# Victorian Circular Activator

The Victorian Circular Activator (VCA) is a physical innovation hub that works to help activate the transition towards a more circular economy through a combination of applied research, activation programs, and annual circular economy innovation showcases.



The VCA is a collaboration between RMIT University, RMIT Activator, Swinburne University, the Australian Circular Economy Hub (ACE Hub), Circular Economy Victoria (CEV), and Sustainability Victoria (SV).



This project is supported by the Victorian Government's Recycling Victoria Innovation Fund as part of the **Circular Economy Business Innovation Centre (CEBIC)**.



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# How to use this report?

This report aims to help set the foundation for greater collaboration between current and future CE hubs throughout Australia. This report is written to support changemakers at all levels in our common pursuit of accelerating the transition towards a more CE.

## Section 1:

### What is a CE hub?

**Section 1** discusses the meaning of a CE hub at an objective level, and then dives into subjective insights collated from both international and Australian CE hub leaders.

This section can be used to support strategic development and improvement initiatives within CE hubs.

#### Key Takeaways:

- 5 Values of a CE hub

## Section 2:

### How can CE hubs deliver value?

**Section 2** discusses the roles that CE hubs can play from a systemic perspective, and outlines some key types, and best practices.

This section can be used to support operational planning within CE hubs.

#### Key Takeaways:

- 3 Levels of activity
- Physical-digital spectrum
- Best practices

## Section 3:

### How can CE hubs collaborate?

**Section 3** discusses how CE hubs can better collaborate in order to compound the impact of CE content, and engagement opportunities. The words collaboration and integration are used interchangeably, with the latter pointing to more practical examples of the former.

This section can be used as both a source of inspiration to enhance collaboration, as well as a practical guide to integrate content and engagement between hubs.

#### Key Takeaways:

- 6 Principles for collaboration
- Content integration opportunities
- Engagement integration opportunities

# Introduction

**Australia's transition towards a circular economy (CE) is well underway.** Over the past decade Australia and the World have experienced an explosion of bottom up momentum for themes like zero-waste, net-zero, regenerative, and social enterprise. We have also seen top-down structural changes develop at all levels of government and industry in the form of new policy, entities, investment, and more.

Collaboration is a key theme within this transition. This is heard at nearly all CE events, and it is constantly flagged as a fundamental enabler of CE transitions at all levels.

This is, however, easier said than done. Collaboration, like any relationship, is complex and it requires time and constant work from all parties to maintain and develop. In a world where time is the most scarce commodity, working slower together rather than faster alone often seems like a barrier rather than an enabler.

In response to this, CE themed hubs have emerged across the country, working to facilitate the needed collaboration by bring people together in a variety of ways to catalyse and scale CE initiatives. These hubs are all unique, shaped by their contexts of people and place, however more importantly they all share common characteristics.

This report highlights these similarities with the goal to set the scene for a more coordinated approach between CE hubs to emerge, which could help increase the individual, and overall effectiveness of Australian CE hubs. This compounding of impact and refining the signal from the noise can help drive a clear and consistent message to mainstream Australia about the changes needed to transition towards a more CE.

Specifically this report aims to benefit CE hubs by:

- **Increasing the conceptual understanding of CE hubs and collaboration**
- **Providing practical opportunities to better integrate CE content and engagement opportunities between CE hubs.**

There is still a lot of work to be done to realise the collective goal of a fully circular economy in Australia. We invite others to continue to build on this work in the same way that we have built on existing international and Australian work.

# Scope & methodology

In 2020, as part of the design process of the VCA, four CE hubs (CEBIC, ACE Hub, CEV, RMIT CE Hub) came together to explore ways to catalyse and scale collaborative CE innovation. To support the VCA, a piece of work was planned to investigate possible integration opportunities that could help collaborating CE hubs better compound impact across both physical and digital domains.

The initial scope of the project was aimed to uncover practical opportunities for integration between physical and digital CE hubs in Victoria. Early insights from the project, however, indicated that there was a gap in conceptual understanding of two core concepts that the report aimed to build on.

1. **There was no clear work describing what a CE hubs is, or what it can do.**
2. **There were no clear principles for collaboration, rather the word was used in an almost omnipresent way in the CE context, without being defined**

This resulted in a broadening of the scope of the report to provide the conceptual foundation needed before focusing on specific integration opportunities. The methodology used included three phases:

**Phase 1:** Desktop research

**Phase 2:** Co-design workshops between authors and supporters

**Phase 3:** Interviews with Australian CE hub leaders and convenors

This report aimed to answer the following question through a combination of desktop research, interviews with Australian CE hub leaders, and the combined experience of the project team.

**How can CE hubs in Australia better integrate/collaborate to increase the impact of their CE content and engagement opportunities to accelerate the transition towards a more CE?**

The following supporting questions were used during the research and interview phases:

- What is a CE hub? (physical & digital)
- What does integration/collaboration mean in the context of a CE hub?
- What aspects of a CE hub could be integrated in practice?
- What types of content are needed and how could they be better created/shared/used?
- What types of engagement opportunities are needed and how could they be better created/shared/used?

# **Section 1:** **What is a CE hub?**

# Definition

The project team started by defining what a "hub" was, as well as other commonly used words to describe CE hubs.

Oxford dictionary definitions of some of the various nouns currently in use:

- **"hub"** - the central and most important part of a particular place or activity
- **"hotspot"** - a place where there is a lot of activity or entertainment
- **"lab"** - a room or building used for scientific research, experiments, testing, etc.
- **"platform"** - an opportunity or a place for somebody to express their opinions publicly or make progress in a particular area
- **"network"** - a closely connected group of people, companies, etc.
- **"cluster"** - a group of things of the same type that grow or appear close together
- **"centre"** - a place where a lot of business or cultural activity takes place
- **"centre of excellence"** - a place where a particular kind of work is done extremely well

These words also carry different cultural meaning dependent on context, and it is ultimately up to the respective leadership group to describe their CE hub in the way they think most appealing for their people and place.

## Key words:



The word "hub" is used in this report as a general term for three reasons: 1) It is the project team's preferred dictionary definition; 2) It is aligned to the language used by the European CE Stakeholder Platform; 3) It is aligned to ACE Hub.

A CE hub for the purposes of this report is defined as:

**"A physical and/or digital place that is an important centre of activity, where people work together in common pursuit of a more circular economy."**

# Global CE hub description

Through the research, the project team identified a 2021 reflection paper from the coordination group of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform that took a closer look at the role of CE hubs for a successful circular economy transition. This paper serves as a reflection of current best practice in global CE hub collaboration. (Godina, et al. 2021)

Through their collaborative process the group described a CE hub as quoted below:

"Establishing a hub means providing **an entry point** for **different stakeholders** while also developing and facilitating the **connection and connectivity** between them. Hubs are able to empower and support stakeholders, **contribute to solving problems** and facilitate the **development of practical solutions.**"

The group also found the success of CE hubs to be dependent on 3 factors:



## The vision of the hub has to be clear

Hubs need a well-defined vision, objectives, goals and milestones in the short, medium and long. Their strong mission statement is magnified when embedded into their facilities/offices and actions. This means having an impact, with practical and tangible solutions that can demonstrate and pilot the transition.



## A strong network is fundamental for the success of a hub

Strong national and international networks and a strong international presence have been beneficial for circular economy hubs. The ability to successfully engage local and international stakeholders is paramount.



## A systemic approach is needed

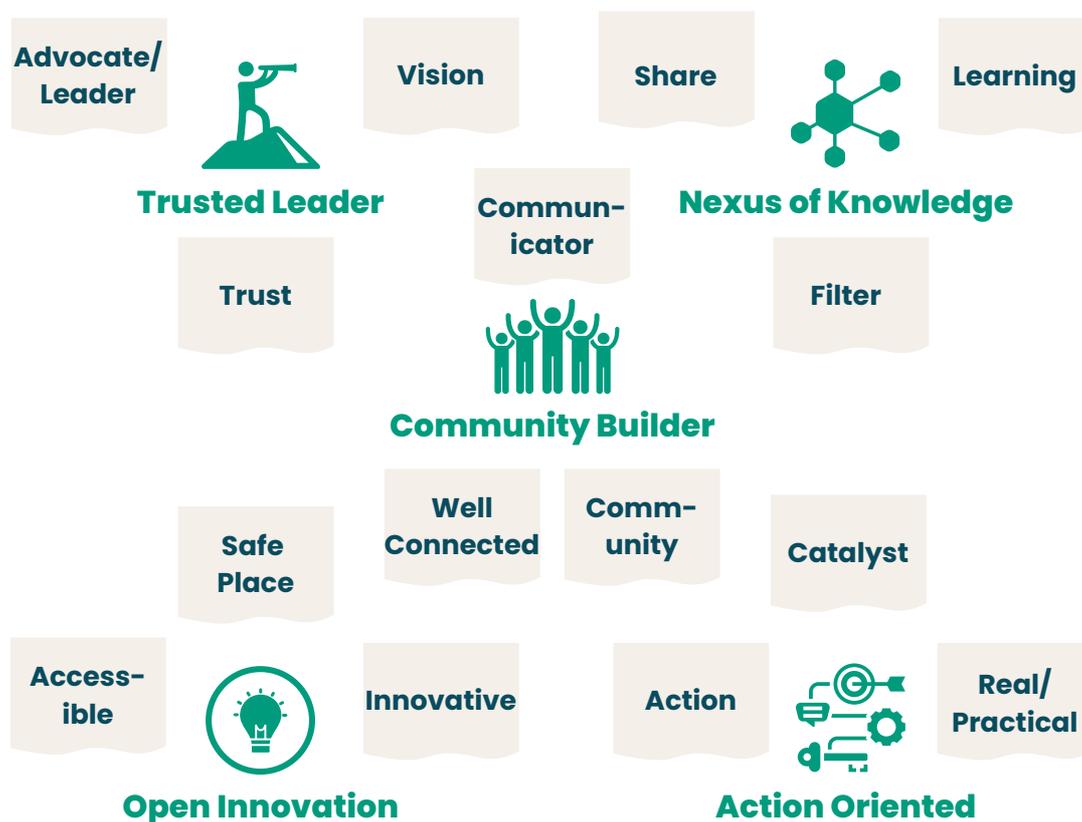
This helps to understand and address the context and areas of interest. The success of hubs depends on the level of understanding of the needs of stakeholders and the dynamics of the context. Only in this way can the hub provide adequate services to stakeholders and produce an actual impact.

# Australian interview reflections

Through the interview phase of the project, 19 Australian CE hub leaders were interviewed and asked to describe what a CE Hub meant to them. The goal of this question was to understand the Australian contextualised understanding of the term, and then compare this to the objective definition, and global best practice factors.

The answers indicated a rich understanding of the CE, and outlined the role of CE hubs in a very holistic and systemic way. Answers varied between interviewees, some focusing more on the technical and commercial aspects of the transition, and others focusing more on the broader social requirements needed to facilitate the transition.

Through a thematic analysis of the answers, fifteen key characteristics were identified. These characteristics were then refined into the five key pillars as described below and on the following page. The Miro board used for the thematic analysis can be found in the Appendix.



Interview findings were found to align well with first two factors raised by global best practice around having a clear vision and supported by a strong network. The third factor of a systemic approach was however not a prominent theme during the interview process.

Three additional themes were found to be prominent in the Australian context. These focused on the sharing of knowledge, open innovation, and practical action. These are explored in more depth on the following page.

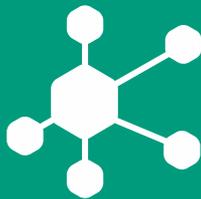
# 5 Values for CE hubs

Building on the three factors of a successful CE hub from the international context, Australian CE hub leaders identified five key values for CE hubs.



## Trusted Leader

**A CE Hub is a stable and respected leader** that builds trust and common understanding driven by a clear and consistent systemic vision.



## Nexus of Knowledge

**A CE Hub is a nexus of knowledge** that filters out the signal from the noise to effectively facilitate learning and the sharing of information.



## Community Builder

**A CE Hub actively builds diverse communities** and opens up new channels that accelerate meaningful relationship development.



## Open Innovation

**A CE Hub is a safe and inclusive space** where people can co-create and develop ideas as part of an open innovation ecosystem.



## Action Oriented

**A CE Hub is action oriented** and leverages shared resources to catalyse real and practical outcomes for contextual problems.

## **Section 2:** **How can CE hubs deliver value?**

# Levels of activity

With the five values of a CE hub helping to describe what a CE hub is, this section explores the roles that CE hubs play, and the value that they deliver. This section starts by setting a conceptual foundation to understand the role of CE hubs from a systemic perspective, and then outlines some key types, and best practices.

A research project undertaken by the VCA to map the CE ecosystem in Victoria identified that action towards a more CE was needed on macro, meso, and micro levels to help decision makers develop appropriate actions targeting the different levels of the economy (Gajanayake, et al. 2022).

Building on this systemic view, this report defines three level at which CE hubs operate as:

## Macro level:

**CE hubs that operate at a national and state level**

### **Description:**

CE Hubs working at a macro level generally converge activity related to progressing the CE at a conceptual and systemic level. This activity is largely about progressing the development of the CE body of knowledge, as well as setting the broader social-technical context in which the transition to a CE takes place.

### **Examples:**

Researchers meeting regularly to discuss and advance CE research; A national coordinating body of a CE taskforce; An online platform where multiple actors can find information, engage and collaborate.

## Meso level:

**CE hubs that operate at an industrial sector or local or regional level**

### **Description:**

CE Hubs working at a meso level generally converge activity related to a transactional or relational level. This activity is largely about progressing the connections and relationships needed to transition to a CE.

### **Examples:**

An industry or community group hosting regular CE related education or networking events; A startup hub providing acceleration programs, mentoring, and opportunities to connect with key partners and funders.

# Levels of activity cont.

## Micro level:

**CE hubs that operate at an organisational or individual level**

### Description:

CE Hubs working at a micro level generally converge activity at an organisational or thematic level. This activity is largely focused on application of the CE body of knowledge within a defined scope or in a defined place.

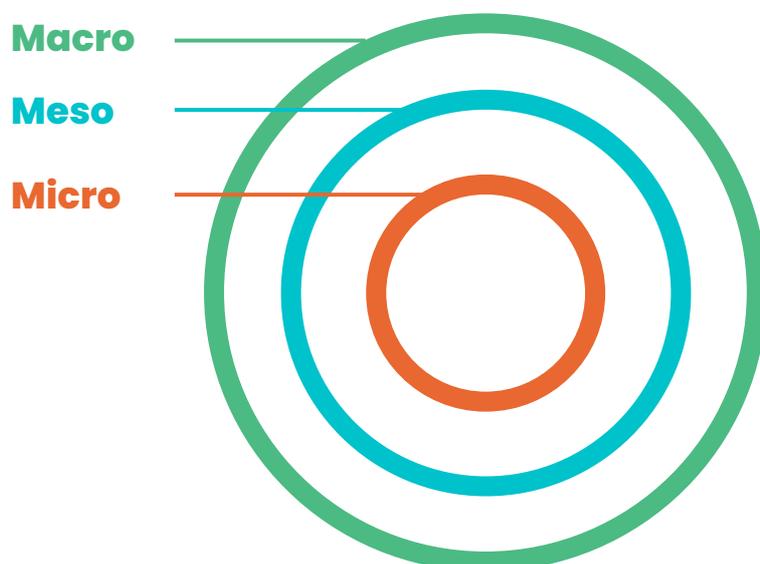
### Example:

A repair cafe where people meet every Sunday to repair items; A tool library where people can share items; A community garden where people can compost and grow their own food.

This report largely focuses on the roles that macro and meso level CE Hubs play within the transition towards a more CE, as well as the possible collaboration/integration opportunities that exist between them.

CE Hubs operating at these levels are well placed to act as transition brokers, as described in further detail in Dr. Jacqueline Cramer's pioneering work on Network Governance (Cramer 2020).

In 2022, NSW Circular (Now Circular Australia) published an insightful report focused on CE community hubs, that are described as micro level CE hubs in this report. The project team encourages readers that would like to explore micro level CE hubs in more detail to read the CE Community Hubs report (Lopes, AM, et al. 2022).



# Physical-digital spectrum

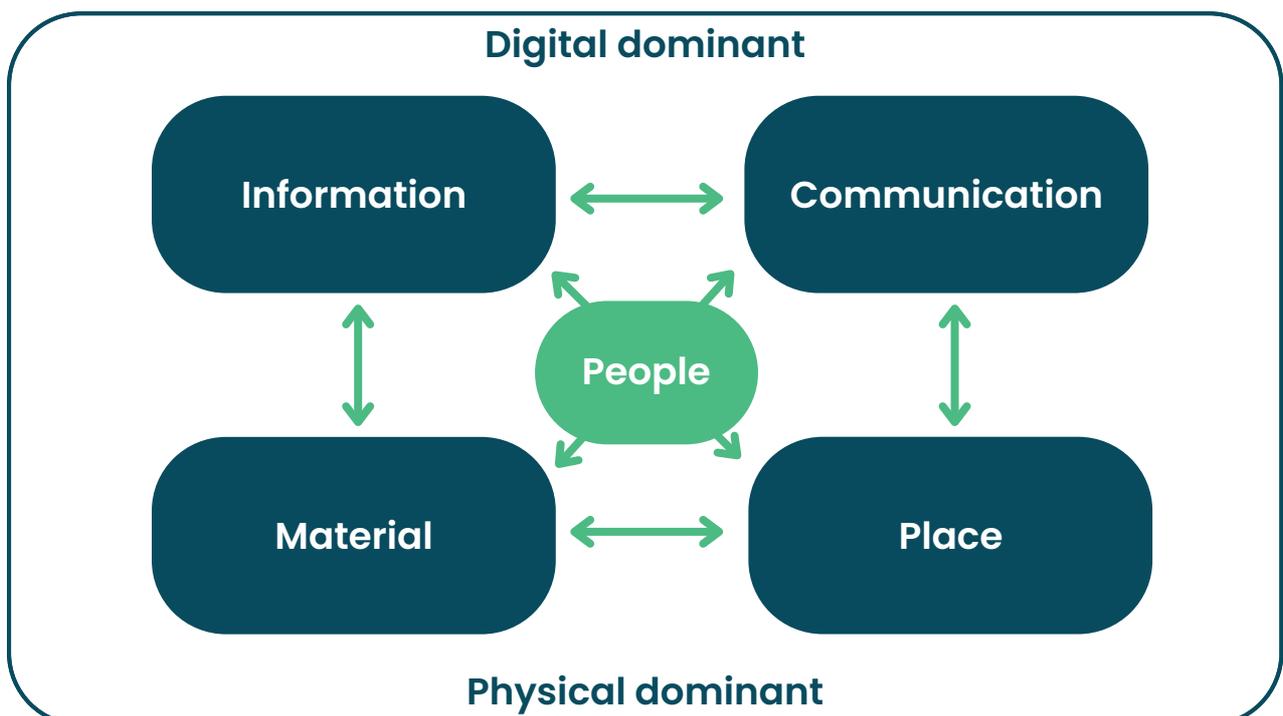
Continuing with a systemic lens, this report also explored how CE hubs deliver value in both physical and digital domains. This builds on the conceptual understanding needed to successfully realise integration opportunities.

The report recognises the importance of CE hubs having a presence in both physical and digital domains. Through both research and the lived experience of the authors and interviewees, it was found that these two domains are in fact aspects of the same thing. New technologies are promoting the cohesion of these two domains in ever more accessible yet complex ways.

This project puts forward the idea that CE hubs hardly ever operate in a purely physical or digital domain, but rather operate somewhere along a physical-digital spectrum that works to compound the overall impact and experiences of their stakeholders

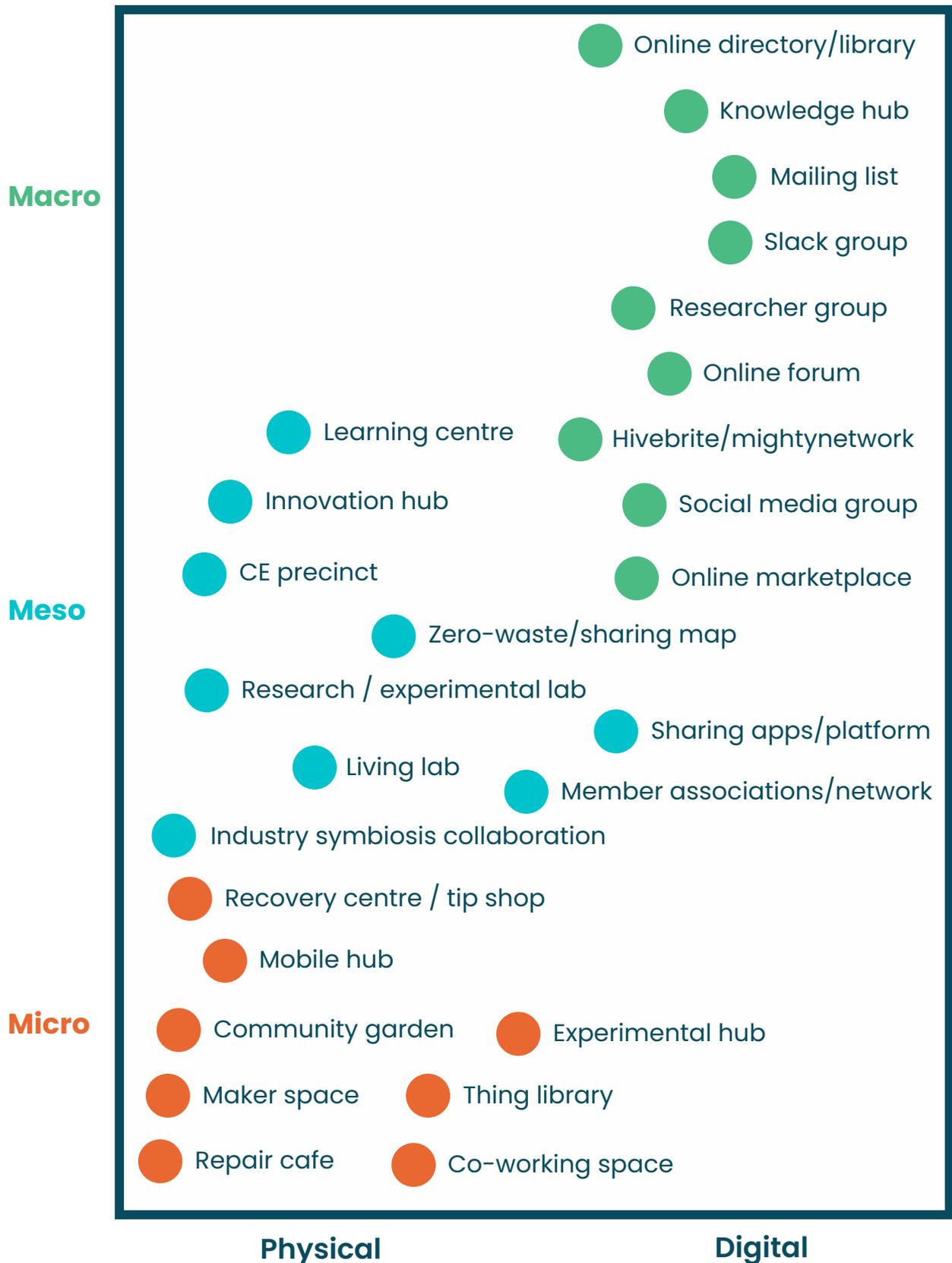
Below are some of the key points from the research and interview process that support this concept. The project team has also attempted to illustrate how key CE hub elements interact within this spectrum.

- The transition towards a CE ultimately occurs in the physical domain (it's about materials), but it is often largely managed digitally
- All CE hubs have both digital and physical components
- Physical hubs tend to be more specific in focus and therefore need the support of digital tools to connect with relevant resources
- Digital hubs provide practical information that enables the circularity of materials in the real world



# CE hub examples

A number of key CE hub types have been mapped according to the three levels of activity, and the physical-digital spectrum. This was done to help the reader understand the described systemic perspectives in practice. More work is needed to refine both the systemic perspectives, as well as a more precise mapping of CE hubs.



# Best practice examples



## European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

The Platform brings together stakeholders active in the broad field of the circular economy across Europe. As a "network of networks", it goes beyond sectoral activities and highlights cross-sector opportunities. It also provides a meeting place for stakeholders to share and scale up effective solutions and address specific challenges.



## Het Groene Brein

By formulating substantiated Visions, Het Groene Brein shows the perspective of a sustainable, circular economy. Through a network of almost 150 scientists, they support entrepreneurs who want to take steps towards a new, sustainable economy.



## Circle Economy Knowledge Hub

Knowledge Hub is an open-collaborative library of case studies about the circular economy that makes knowledge openly accessible and enables anyone who would like to support the transition towards a circular economy to contribute their know-how into one shared place.



## Nordic Circular Hotspot

The Nordic Circular Hotspot manages and facilitates three main programs: 1) A ten-year circular market transition program for cross segment, cross sector and cross silo collaboration. 2) A multi-stakeholder platform, 3) A two-day event exploring circular opportunities in the region.



## Australian Circular Economy Hub

The ACE Hub is Australia's go-to resource for circular economy thinking and action. It provides a range of initiatives to companies, individuals and communities including: a knowledge hub; a collaboration portal annual reports, working groups, etc.

# Best practices examples cont.



## **Circular Economy Business Innovation Centre (SV)**

CEBIC is a virtual centre for businesses, industry bodies, research organisations, governments and communities looking to accelerate the transition towards a more circular economy. The centre drives change through: grants, funding and investment; research and insights; news; events; etc.



## **Business Sustainability Program (Green Industries SA)**

The Business Sustainability Program assists South Australian businesses and industry sectors to accelerate sustainable change and transition to a more circular economy.

Experienced and knowledgeable project managers and advisers provide free advice, tools and guidance; and facilitate business-to-business connections and networking, basing their services on the principles of a circular economy.



## **Hunter & Central Coast Circular**

Hunter & Central Coast Circular is a website that offers a database and engagement platform for circular economy participants in the region, and fosters change in how the region processes and repurposes waste as a resource. The website also houses the regional circular economy roadmap.



## **Hume Circular Business Network**

Spearheaded by Council's Circular Business Network, Hume is taking circular action across multiple sectors, including toward a conducive policy environment, encouraging circular business model transitions, and engaging community to leverage existing and new circular projects.



## **Circular Australia**

Circular Australia is an independent not-for-profit company accelerating the transition to a circular economy by providing transparent and open data to the market, convening national collaborative task-forces, embedding circular economy into special activation precincts, etc.

## **Section 3:** **How can CE hubs collaborate?**

# The case for collaboration

Building a CE is a long journey that requires collaboration at all levels of society. The individual pioneers of the CE in Australia have now been joined by a myriad of groups and individuals, driving the transition within their organisations and communities. This swell of bottom up initiatives has developed into a movement for systemic change, bottom-up, top-down and everything in between.

With more and more actors joining the journey to circularity, CE hubs are more important than ever to ensure that actors are aware of, and have access to, initiatives that will both advance their own journey, as well as the broader system closer to circularity.

A book by Jacqueline Cramer reflecting on the takeaways from interviews with global CE changemakers revealed that Australia's attitude towards collaboration was very low compared to other countries. The below table is taken from the book and shows that Australia indicates a medium to high level of difficulty to implement coordinated bottom-up action, termed 'Network Governance' in the book (Cramer 2022).

This section aims to explore how we work towards improving this collective attitude towards collaboration by developing a set of principles, and then suggesting tangible actions around the integration of CE content and engagement opportunities.

		Government <-> Industry	Government <-> NGOs	NGOs <-> Industry	Difficulty to implement network governance
1	Netherlands	Cooperative	Cooperative/sometimes antagonistic	Cooperative/sometimes antagonistic	Low
2	Flanders	Cooperative	Cooperative	Cooperative/sometimes antagonistic	Medium
3	Italy	In-between	In-between	Cooperative	Medium
4	Finland	Cooperative	Cooperative/sometimes antagonistic	Cooperative/sometimes antagonistic	Low
5	Norway	Cooperative	Cooperative/sometimes antagonistic	Cooperative/sometimes antagonistic	Low
6	Scotland	Cooperative	Cooperative	In-between, depending on NGO	Low
7	Hungary	Antagonistic	Depending on the NGO	Depending on NGO	Medium/high
8	Slovenia	In-between	Antagonistic	Antagonistic	Medium/high
9	Slovakia	Antagonistic	Cooperative	Cooperative	Medium/high
10	Czech Republic	In-between	Antagonistic or in-between	Antagonistic or in-between	Medium/high
11	Poland	Antagonistic	Cooperative, NGO dependent on money	Cooperative, depending on NGO	Medium/high
12	Taiwan	In-between	In-between	In-between	Low
13	Turkey	In-between	Depending on NGO	Depending on NGO	Low
14	Australia	In-between	Cooperative/sometimes antagonistic	Cooperative/sometimes antagonistic	Medium/high
15	Brazil	In-between	Depending on NGO	Depending on NGO	Medium
16	Canada	Antagonistic	Cooperative, depending on NGO	Antagonistic with some exceptions	High, fear for co-optation

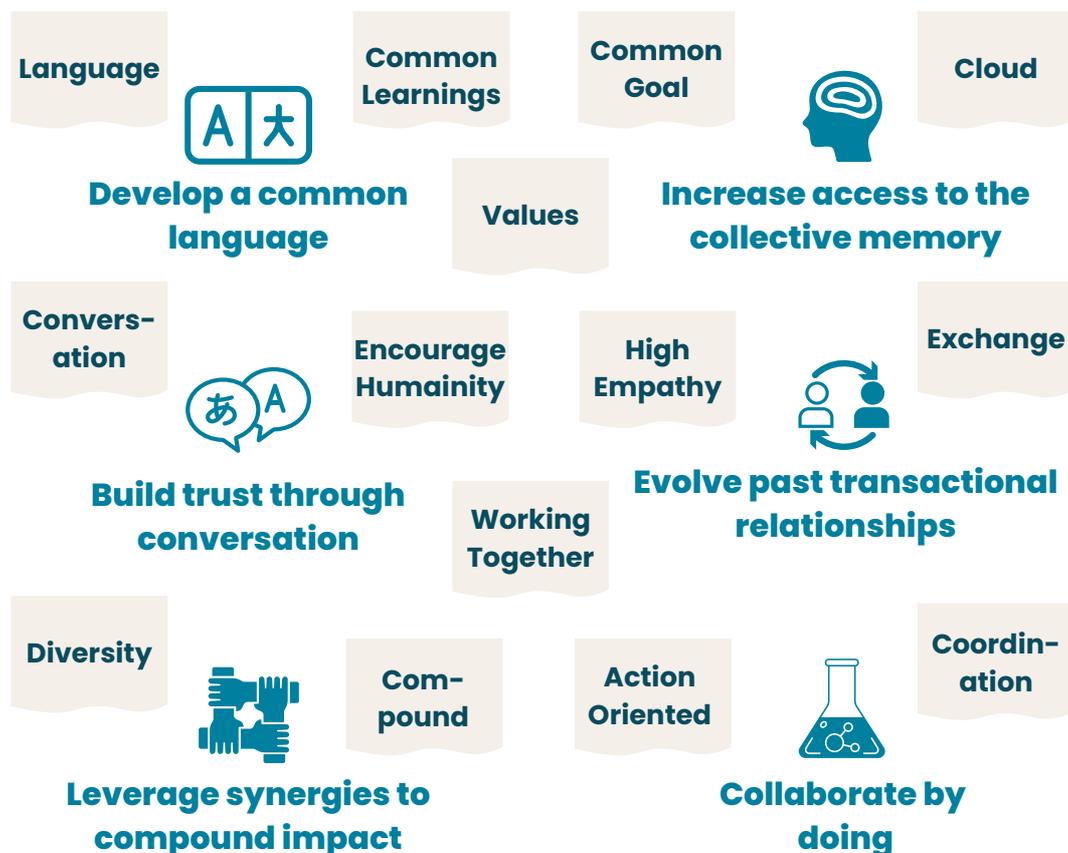
1. Based on assessment by the interviewees

Source: Cramer, J, 2022, *Building a Circular Future: Ten Takeaways for Global Changemakers*, Amsterdam Economic Board

# Australian interview reflections

Interviewees were asked what collaboration or integration between and within CE Hubs meant to them. This question was asked in a broad manner to uncover the subjective understanding of the terms 'integration' and 'collaboration'.

Through a thematic analysis of the answers, fourteen key characteristics were identified. These characteristics were refined to the below six principles for collaboration between CE Hubs. The Miro board used for the thematic analysis can be found in the Appendix.



Interview findings indicated that there was a strong recognition of the need for improved collaboration/integration/coordination in general, as well as between the various CE hubs.

It was also noted that there are already a lot of great examples of diverse collaborations currently driving the transition towards a more CE, and that better story telling about how the collaborations came about should be pursued in addition to the reported impact and outcomes.

Collated insights from the CE hub leaders have been organised into a set of six principles to support collaborative efforts in the future.

# 6 principles for collaboration

## Develop a common language



CE Hub collaboration works to create a common language that simplifies the complexity involved in the transition towards a more circular economy.

## Increase access to the collective memory



CE hub collaboration works to provide easier access to our collective memory of circular economy successes and lessons from failures. This can be facilitated through advances in cloud and website interfacing technologies.

## Build trust through conversation



CE hub collaboration promotes a community of transparency, trust and empathy through regular conversation and communication.

## Evolve past transactional relationships



CE hub collaboration promotes working relationships that are not purely transactional through the creation of shared value propositions in pursuit of common goals.

## Leverage synergies to compound impact



CE hub collaboration works to create a compounding effect through stronger coordination to find gaps and mitigate duplication by leveraging synergies between diverse actors, skills and pooled assets.

## Collaborate by doing



CE hub collaboration has a bias for action which then helps to build the social scaffolding needed for more complex and integrated collaborations to emerge.

# CE hub integration reflections

The final component of this project was to identify tangible integration opportunities between CE hubs for CE content and engagement. The words collaboration and integration are used interchangeably, with the latter pointing to more practical examples of the former. Although this aspect of the project was reduced in scope, the project team was able to surface some practical opportunities.

Below are some general insights about integration opportunities taken from the interview process. This is followed by two pages of practical examples on content, and engagement opportunity integration.

## General reflections:

- National and state level gap analysis initiatives should be undertaken by CE hubs and governments
- CE hubs should work together to better sign post CE information and tools
- Contact people for CE hubs should be made available on their websites
- Online portals could consider a CE problem concierge to help stakeholders find appropriate solutions
- Time in needed to build relationships
- CE hubs need to develop a common mainstream CE message
- Established CE hubs should foster a safe space for emerging hubs to ask for help
- CE hubs need to release the need to own the change and instead focus on facilitating change
- Formal independent certifiers of CE content are needed in Australia
- CE hubs should have unique roles and audiences - Diversity in the ecosystem opens opportunities for niches to form and innovation to flourish
- Word of mouth is the most trustworthy
- There needs to be content for all ages, not just professional aged people
- More 'owner operator' friendly content and events are needed
- Slow down a bit. This is complex work, and requires influencing and persuading against very engrained systems. Need to support and build resilience of people in the CE space. (A winge and a win)
- Engage through doing. Working relationships that develop over time. Pick a project and start to collectively work on it.

## Content and engagement insights:

The tables on the following page are a start of an effort to better integrate CE hub content and engagement opportunities. This work is not comprehensive, but serves as another step towards a more collaborative Australian CE hub ecosystem.

# Content opportunities

Identified Content	Integration Opportunities
<b>Develop a common language</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common definition of CE</li> <li>• Common CE 101 slides</li> <li>• Standard document templates</li> <li>• CE Standards</li> <li>• Policies and legislation</li> <li>• Objective data</li> </ul>	<p>CE hubs could work together to co-create a common definition and CE 101 content.</p> <p>CE hubs could reference national standards and policies to reinforce a common message based on data.</p>
<b>Increase access to the collective memory</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Academic research</li> <li>• Books &amp; publications</li> <li>• Industry reports</li> <li>• Event recordings</li> </ul>	<p>CE hubs could either link their online libraries through API's or a shared cloud database.</p>
<b>Build trust through conversation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview podcasts</li> <li>• Opinion articles</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> <li>• News</li> </ul>	<p>CE hubs could integrate common language into opinion pieces in order to reinforce a common narrative while appealing to a broader audience.</p>
<b>Evolve past transactional relationships</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CE contracts</li> </ul>	<p>More work needs to be done.</p>
<b>Leverage synergies to compound impact</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capability statements</li> <li>• Educational content</li> <li>• Job descriptions</li> </ul>	<p>CE hubs could develop industry standard capability statements showing what they need and what they can provide.</p>
<b>Collaborate by doing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical tools &amp; frameworks</li> <li>• How-to guides</li> <li>• Sector specific playbooks</li> <li>• Gamified experiences</li> </ul>	<p>CE hubs could share and co-design practical tools for industry, community, and government,</p>

# Engagement opportunities

Identified Content	Possible Opportunities
<b>Develop a common language</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures</li> <li>• Masterclasses</li> <li>• Documentary/Film screenings</li> </ul>	CE hubs could coordinate events to themed weeks to reduce noise and generate a greater reach.
<b>Increase access to the collective memory</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel discussions</li> </ul>	CE hubs could share their recordings.
<b>Build trust through conversation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-1 calls with CE hub convenors</li> <li>• Consultations</li> <li>• Expos &amp; trade shows</li> <li>• Conferences</li> <li>• Online Forums</li> <li>• Networking events</li> </ul>	CE hubs could co-develop pathways for stakeholders that flow between hubs and are not just dependent on one hub. CE hubs could coordinate with large event organisers for greater reach.
<b>Evolve past transactional relationships</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Annual general meetings</li> <li>• Co-design sessions</li> <li>• Co-strategy sessions</li> </ul>	CE hubs could coordinate their respective strategic and operational planning periods better to promote closer alignment.
<b>Leverage synergies to compound impact</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roundtables</li> <li>• Hackathons</li> <li>• CE jobs fair</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Special interest groups</li> <li>• Taskforces</li> </ul>	CE hubs could organise joint innovation themed events to encourage cross pollination of ideas and contacts.
<b>Collaborate by doing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visits &amp; excursions</li> <li>• Award programs</li> <li>• Incubation/Acceleration programs</li> </ul>	CE hubs could coordinate annual delegations between local, regional, or state levels.

# Conclusion

This report has hopefully provided the reader with a stronger conceptual understanding of what a CE hub is; what roles a CE hub can play in the transition, and how CE hubs can better collaborate. Through a robust interview process, this report has reflected the sentiments of a majority of the Australian CE hub ecosystems through the 5 values of a CE hub and 6 principles for collaboration.

Although there is a lot of room for improvement to better integrate Australian CE hubs in the coming months and years, there is significant momentum and a strong willingness to continually improve.

This report has also advanced the Australian CE ecosystems understanding of the systemic roles that CE Hubs can play through the 3 activity levels and the physical-digital spectrum.

The project team hopes that this can serve as a reference for further work in this space, as well as an invitation to collaborate.

## Recommendations

### **CE hubs need to focus on getting CE to go viral**

This report recommends that CE hubs across the country undertake an ambitious multi-year initiative to co-design and collectively deliver a clear coordinated message with the aim of making CE an ubiquitous term among the Australian public.

### **Governments should adequately fund Transition Brokers**

This report recommends that governments at a Federal and State level ensure that viable CE hubs bringing about change through Network Governance styled initiatives have adequate access to long term funding that has the flexibility in outputs needed to successfully foster the much needed complex system transitions.

### **CE hubs should commit to, and report on integration initiatives**

This report recommends that CE hubs commit to and report on tangible actions taken to better integrate appropriate work with other CE hubs. Content and engagement opportunities are suggested to be a good starting point.

### **CE hubs should improve storytelling of successful collaborations**

This report recommends that CE hubs include details of collaborative practices in case study and story telling initiatives. Case studies should not only reflect the achieved impact, but also the processes and relationships that were needed to achieve it.

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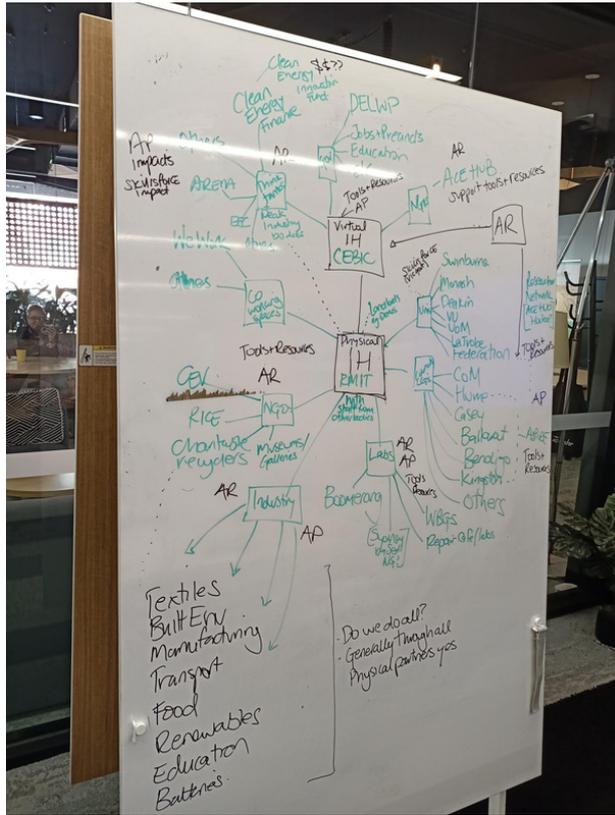
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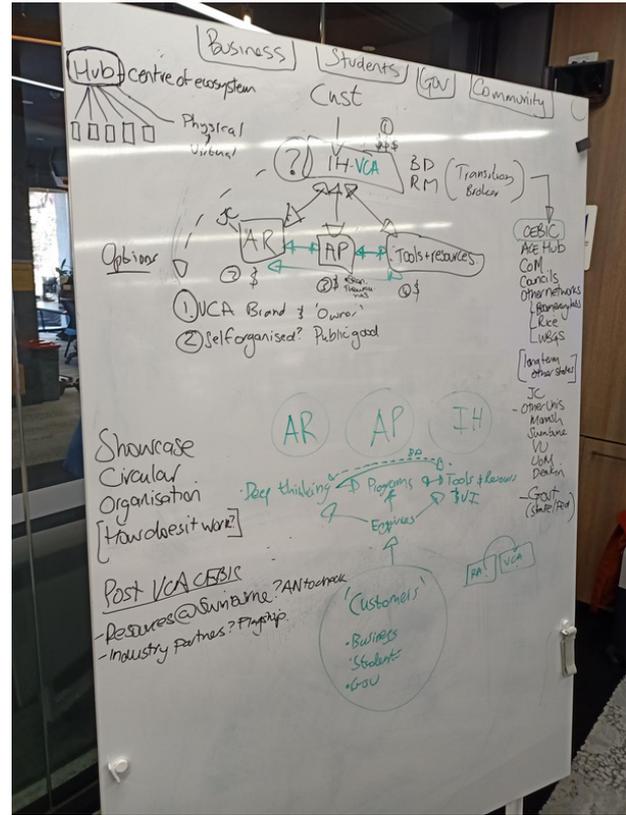


# Appendix

# Co-design workshops



**Workshop 1**



**Workshop 2**



**Project Team Meeting**







VICTORIAN  
CIRCULAR *activator*



The VCA acknowledges the living connections of the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples to the lands and waters of the Eastern Kulin Nation. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.