

# CIRCULAR

ISSUE NO 3 JAN 2024

## WELCOME!

Welcome to the new year and the third edition of AHRWMA's *In the Circular*!

Welcome to the January edition of our quarterly newsletter, '*In the Circular*', in which we are proud to share our work and keep you abreast of updates to our industry.

Entering a new year is a great time to set goals, make plans for improvement and to celebrate successes of the previous year.

At AHRWMA, we have several goals for 2024 which we are excited to embark upon or to continue. These include the expansion of our leading-edge landfill, investigating the harvesting of landfill gases, increasing our ability to recover Construction and Demolition resources, seeking to expand the volume and range of materials that we recover and further engaging with our community across the region.

It's going to be a great year!

## STATEWIDE

### GISA RELEASES CIRCULAR ECONOMY RESOURCE REPORT

Results of SA's recovery rates of masonry, metals, organics, cardboard, plastics, and glass have been collated and published by GISA. SA achieved a recovery rate of 81.9%, a whopping 3,990,000 tonnes! Of this, 92% was reprocessed locally. AHRWMA contributes to the recovery rate through our Resource Recovery Centres (Heathfield and Brinkley) and by recovering materials (such as metals) that have been sent to the Brinkley Landfill.

AHRWMA has provided data on our recovery efforts to GISA in preparation for the 22-23 report, expected in August 2024.

The [2021-22 Circular Economy Resource Report](#) is available via the GISA website.

## SITE DEVELOPMENT

### LANDFILL GAS PUMPING TRIAL

A trial to determine the feasibility of establishing infrastructure to harvest methane from the Brinkley Landfill is slated to begin in 2024.

Methane is a potent greenhouse gas which is produced when organic materials breakdown in landfill. Harvesting the gas will convert the methane to carbon dioxide, a less harmful gas.



## LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS

### BRON AND THE REPAIR CAFE VOLUNTEERS, HUT COMMUNITY CENTRE, ALDGATE

Who amongst us has ever worried over a warranty, the cost of replacement components, a zip that can't be repaired or a software update that renders a phone obsolete? In 2021, the Federal government released an Inquiry Report titled '[Right to Repair](#)'. The inquiry found numerous barriers to consumers which made repairing their belongings challenging and resulted in disposal and replacement. Disposal of items (such as whitegoods and clothing) contribute to landfill tonnes across Australia whilst also disempowering and costing consumers. Bron is resolute that this must change. One evening, while watching a documentary, '*Transition Town Totness*', she had an epiphany. She saw groups across the world advocating for resource limits, community resilience, social justice, and synergistic collaboration on local initiatives.

*"I knew I wanted to be part of this!"* states Bron.

These principles drive her work at the at the Hut Community Centre Repair Café.

The Repair Café is an initiative of The Hut Community Centre and has been operating since 2018. Open monthly on the second Sunday to the public, a committed group of volunteer experts gather to work on repairing objects such as electronic and PC diagnostics, electrical and mechanical small motors, bicycles, woodworking, gardening tools and clothing and we would love more volunteers to join our team.

*"We have electricians, a small engine specialist and people skilled in sewing, woodworking, bike, and general repairs. If they can bring it in, we'll have a go!"*

Bron keeps a record of the items saved from landfill. In the last financial year, 437kg of items were repaired (up from 331 kg the year before). That equates to approximately 15-30 items each day that the Repair Cafe is open. Microwaves, wheelbarrows, bikes, even a much-loved rocking horse have all been given a new lease on life by the volunteers. People come to the Repair Cafe from across the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu. They stay with their object during the repair process. This allows them to connect with the volunteer, value the work that has been done and to upskill themselves.

*"Our aim is that people will save money, reduce landfill and value repair over replacement."*

It's impressive stuff! But that's not all that the Repair Cafe does to support the community to increase the lifespan of their belongings. The Repair Cafe hosts workshops and informative presentations for the public focusing on skills to reduce waste and increase maintenance and repair with titles such as 'Get to know your sewing machine!' and 'Which Bin?' to educate and encourage local community engagement in living and connecting more sustainably. The Repair Cafe hosts clothing swaps that provide further opportunity for the community to interact and reduce their textile waste while updating their wardrobe. The Repair Café also hosted a talk from The Hills Textile Recycling Group associated with some Adelaide Hills Op Shops who have developed a brochure about how to avoid clothing waste and avoid the significant problem of fast fashion.

*"We have a mother and child's clothing swap in May next year."*

How heartening to meet people like Bron and the volunteers at the Repair Cafe, putting our Right to Repair to action! The Repair Cafe is located at The Hut Community Centre, Aldgate. It is open to the public from 10am to 1pm on the second Sunday of every month and can be [found on Facebook](#).



Volunteers  
at the  
Repair Café,  
Aldgate

## REGIONAL COLLABORATION

### NATIONAL RECYCLING WEEK

National Recycling Week (13th to 19th of November) is a great opportunity to build public awareness relating to the 'difficult waste streams' that can be accepted at our region's Resource Recovery Centres. These items cannot be placed into kerbside bins as they can cause groundwater and soil pollution if they were to enter the landfill cells.

Our region's social media posts and library displays focused on the benefits of clearing space in the shed by dragging out forgotten cans of paint, garden chemicals, gas bottles, car batteries, cardboard boxes, or mattresses.

We were also featured in the Hills Courier and Murray Bridge Standard, widening the audience that the message can reach.

A huge thank you to the wonderful staff of the Coventry (Stirling), Mt Barker and Murray Bridge libraries for their support and cooperation. Additional thanks to the Communications Teams of our Member Councils for their amazing creativity.



### MERRY CHRISTMAS, RHINOS!

There's nothing a rhinoceros loves more than to push logs around! AHRWMA has supported the Monarto Zoo by delivering red gum logs for the White Rhinos, Carrie and Uhura. The logs were collected at the Heathfield Resource Recovery Centre in the Adelaide Hills Council. Too big to go through the shredder, the logs were transported to Monarto in the Rural City of Murray Bridge. Carrie and Uhura were happy to see their new toys and Dave, the lucky truck driver who delivered the logs, was happy to meet them. We're thrilled to see these potentially problematic items put to good use! [Check out our video to see our memories of the day!](#)



### STAY SOCIAL!

Stay up to date with news from AHRWMA and our industry:

[Facebook](#)  
[Instagram](#)  
[LinkedIn](#)  
[Twitter](#)



### BRINKLEY BUS TOURS BEGIN

AHRWMA was proud to host a bus tour of our Brinkley site for science teachers from Heathfield High School and the Australian Science and Maths School.

The visiting teachers explored links to the Chemistry and Earth and Environmental Science curricula by viewing the groundwater and landfill gas testing ports, resource recovery and safe disposal practices and (their favourite!) the stockpile of mattresses awaiting shredding.

Feedback from our visitors was uniformly positive with quotes including:

"It was amazing to see just how many items can be recycled. I had no idea that there was so much effort and thought going in to protecting groundwater and recovering steel and copper."

"The clay lining on the landfill pit was incredible and I loved visiting the Brinkley ReUse Centre."

AHRWMA is looking forward to hosting more bus tours of our Brinkley site in 2024.

# TEXTILE RECOVERY

Textiles have long remained a challenging item to recover due to the mixtures of materials in their construction. Many are comprised of blends of cotton, polyester, metal zips and plastic buttons. Enter the 'Seamless' product stewardship scheme created by the Australian Fashion Council. Like other stewardship schemes (such as Paintback or Tyrecycle) a levy of 4c per garment will be used to fund transformations to the clothing industry in Australia. This would involve three broad improvement strategies:

- Business models that keep clothing in circulation for longer (such as rentals, repairs, and resales)
- Sustainable and ethical production of fibers
- Design methods that allow fibers to be reused in new forms.

These goals sound lofty, but already change is in motion. Major clothing labels including Adidas and H&M have recently released clothing lines designed to be 'unmade'. The CSIRO is working on new strains of cotton which can be more sustainably grown in Australian conditions and the French government now allows citizens to recoup the cost of repairing clothing.

AHRWMA is currently in conversation with Australian company BlockTexx to discuss a collection campaign for household linens in 2024.

Want to learn more? We recommend ['The Jeans Redesign'](#) by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation website and CSIRO's ['Next Generation Cotton'](#).

## FROM OUR MEMBER COUNCILS

### ALEXANDRINA'S GETTING GREENER!

Alexandrina Council has recorded a 4% reduction in waste to landfill in the FY22/23. This improvement is strengthened by an increase in FOGO collected across the region.

### AHC KERBSIDE TRIAL CONTINUES

AHC's FOGO Trial, trialling three different bin collection options in three different locations in the Woodside/Lenswood vicinity, began on 24<sup>th</sup> October and will continue for twelve months (in collaboration with EastWaste). The aim of the bin collection change is to improve environmental impact by decreasing the amount of waste that goes to landfill, particularly organic waste. AHC will also assess what bin system works best for their community and the environment, as part of the trial.

### MURRAY BRIDGE

Residents in flood affected areas across the Rural City of Murray Bridge are glad to welcome back regular waste collection services. During the high-water events, alternative collection points were put in place for residents affected by road closures.

### MOUNT BARKER

MBDC continues to support the Local Government Association's Circular Procurement Pilot Project. This project aims to combine the collective buying power of participating South Australian councils to drive demand for recyclable materials in SA.

