



Circular Hepburn Card Deck

Part of the Toolkit for Business and Beyond

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As part of the Circular Hepburn Toolkit this deck of cards has been developed to inspire reflection, experimentation and innovation around the circular economy. It can also be used as a conversation starter, or as a brainstorming tool, within your business or with suppliers and customers.

Ways to use these cards

- 1 Get your staff together and pick a card and brainstorm what you're already doing, what you could do in 6 months, 1 year and 2 years time.
- 2 To go deeper with the cards try focussing on one of the following at a time: your product/service; your business as a whole; your ecosystem.
- 3 Try the same exercises with your suppliers, customers or other local businesses. Start to see what is possible through collaboration and connectivity.

If you have any suggestions to improve this toolkit or any examples of how you're implementing the strategies, please share them via the QR code.





01 Circular Strategy

Refuse

Principle: Design out waste and pollution

01 Refuse “Just say No!” (thank you)

The most powerful way to bust out of the Take-Make-Waste linear economy is to refuse products and materials that you don't need. Your “No!” is one less demand on our planet's resources, and one less item of waste. What materials can you refuse without disrupting your business?

The business wins

Refusing packaging saves time and money on disposing of waste. Taking the stand to refuse materials sends the message to the market that your business is a principled leader in circularity.

Reflections If refusing packaging or products will be disruptive to your business, could it still be beneficial in the mid or long term? Could having conversations with your suppliers and customers about refusing materials be a first step? If you supply packaging with your products can you provide opportunities and encouragement for customers to say “No, thanks!”?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Design out waste and pollution



02 Rethink

Circular Strategy

Principle: Design out waste and pollution

02 Rethink “Find a better way”

Pause to consider the waste and pollution generated by your products and services over their whole lifecycle. Taking a moment to think about the materials that flow through your business will often throw up fresh ideas on how to deliver to your customers with more circularity.

The business wins

You may discover a market niche and/or a much more cost-effective way of operating. Supplying or advocating for circular products will increase your business reputation for best practice.

Reflections

If your business makes products, are there ways to increase their longevity, or redesign them for repairability and reuse? If you are a service-provider or your business sells other people’s products, can you talk to your customers or suppliers about these ideas? Do you feel confident having such conversations? What support or resources might give you that confidence?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Design out waste and pollution



03

Circular Strategy

Reduce

Principle: Design out waste and pollution

03 Reduce “Narrow the flow”

Sometimes you just can't say “No!”, but you can say “Less please!” Look at the flow of materials coming into your business. A first glance will often reveal unnecessary excess. You may be able implement some reductions in resource use straight away. Others may require further investigation.

The business wins

Reducing inflow of materials saves on purchasing and waste disposal costs. Renting rather than purchasing is a way of reducing resource use that allows new business models and opportunities to emerge.

Reflections

Where is the “low hanging fruit” i.e. reductions in resource use that you can implement with minimal cost or effort? How could reducing the materials that flow through your business actually improve efficiency and lower costs? Could you help reduce market demand for resources by renting rather than selling the products you supply?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Design out waste and pollution



04 Re-use

Circular Strategy

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials

04 Re-use “Keep ‘em in the loop”

Second-hand goods are the simplest form of re-use. Any pre-loved products and materials that you procure for your business circle back into the economy without any extra input of energy or resources. You can also extend the current use of goods by sharing or co-owning them.

The business wins

Second hand goods cost less and can add character to your business. Shared re-use systems, such as standardised transport crates or a bottle refill service, create savings in local supply chain infrastructure, whilst promoting collaboration and local pride.

Reflections

Which second hand goods and materials might reduce costs and/or enhance the character of your business? Are there local businesses that might be a good match for co-owning appliances, vehicles, etc? Is it possible that your “waste” products are valuable inputs for another business (or vice versa)?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials



05

Circular Strategy

Repair

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials

05 Repair “Good to go with some TLC”

In the Take-Make-Waste linear economy, anything with a defect is on the slippery slope towards landfill. All the more so if it can't fulfil its intended use. Repair is the first responder of the circular economy, tending to damaged goods and getting them back on their feet.

The business wins

Establishing a repair service can generate local income whilst also keeping the embedded value of repaired goods within that local economy. When repair is undertaken by the business offering a product it can strengthen the connection between business and customer.

Reflections

Could you work with your suppliers to offer repairs or source more products from suppliers that offer repairs? How might offering a repair service increase customer connection and loyalty? Could part of your service to customers involve educating and enabling them to undertake their own repairs?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials



06 Refurbish

Circular Strategy

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials

06 Refurbish “Not done yet!”

“Beyond repair” does not necessarily mean the “point of no return”. Replacing major components can restore products to functionality and even elevate them to “state of the art”. If repair is effective first aid, then refurbishment is a new lease of life after successful surgery.

The business wins

Developing local expertise in refurbishment strengthens the retention of value within a community. Income for refurbishment enterprises; cost-effective high-quality cared-for goods; pride in a growing circular industry and in the goods themselves: all these cycle value back into the local economy.

Reflections

What refurbished goods could you procure for your business? What benefits could they bring? Are there refurbishment services in your locality? If not, who might be your allies in sparking them? Any defunct goods, awaiting that trip to the tip, that could be restored to health?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials



07

Circular Strategy

Repurpose

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials

07 Repurpose “A life beyond”

When our discarded products are “beyond refurbishment”, it’s time to send their components off to new lives and fresh functionality. Sometimes it just takes a little creativity to recognise and activate their value in a new situation.

The business wins

Repurposing defunct products and discarded materials requires imagination and connectivity, both of which generate ‘story’ and local pride within local economies. Moving from ad hoc exchanges to a dedicated product material bank can significantly increase value retention, both financial and social.

Reflections

If you design products how can you enable their components to be easily repurposed? If you are in the process of establishing your business infrastructure or premises, what materials might you be able to repurpose in the process? Do you have clients that might be inspired by these ideas?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials



08

Circular Strategy

Recycle

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials

08 Recycle “Return the raw stuff”

“Recycle” suggests the very essence of circularity. However, recycling as an industrial process demands significant inputs of energy and resources. Improving circularity involves minimising these inputs, whilst maximising the quality and quantity of raw materials that re-enter the economy.

The business wins

Recycling waste materials saves on landfill disposal costs. Developing regional recycling hubs has the potential to create jobs and accelerate innovation, whilst making the transition towards circularity more visible.

Reflections

Does your business have effective systems in place to ensure correct use of all bins (e.g. no contamination of recycling bins, no recyclable waste in landfill bins)? Does your business have the capacity to recycle any waste on-site, or advocate for local recycling facilities? What recycled materials could you use as inputs for your business?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials



09

Circular Strategy

Recover

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials

09 Recover “Juice every last bit”

Recovery is the final salvation for materials that are about to slip off the slope into landfill. Food and other organic waste provide many valuable inputs for agriculture and related industries. Certain kinds of waste can also be processed to generate energy for industrial or residential use.

The business wins

Composting organic waste is a big opportunity for Hepburn Shire, and particularly valuable given the amount of food waste generated from residents and businesses alike, and the amount of farming that could benefit from composted organics. A win-win for the environment and the supply chain!

Reflections

Where does your commercial organic waste currently go? Are there specific waste materials that would be valuable inputs for other businesses? If so what systems and relationships would need to be established to ensure the easy transfer of those materials?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Extend the lifespan of materials



10

Circular Strategy

Regenerate

Principle: Regenerate natural systems

10 Regenerate “Replenish the source”

In cards 1-9 of this deck we see different ways of taking responsibility for the materials that we extract - from reducing demand to keeping every possible resource in the loop. With Regenerate we ask ourselves a fresh question: how do we help natural systems replenish what has been depleted?

The business wins

Our economies are nested within nature - the ultimate circular economy! When we invest in regenerative action, we contribute to a healthier ecosystem, a more sustainable operating environment, and a more resilient community and customer base.

Reflections

What opportunities do you have to contribute to the health and resilience of your local environment? Can your business directly contribute to replenishing degraded soils? Are there local landcare groups or regenerative food producers that you could promote through your business?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Regenerate natural systems



11

Circular Strategy

Relocalise

Principle: Regenerate natural systems

11 Relocalise “Make here where it’s at!”

Pause for a moment to imagine all of those trucks and shipping containers moving goods to and fro across the globe. What if the majority of that produce and material circulated within its own region? What would be the benefits to the environment, to supply chain resilience, to local economies?

The business wins

When we activate local supply chains and distribution networks the immediate result is lower costs and increased reliability. Relocalising also increases the opportunity for collaborative technology and processing hubs, shared resources and infrastructure, and local connectivity/support networks.

Reflections

Do you know how far your business supplies have travelled? Could any of them be more locally sourced? What benefits might come from having a visible relationship with local suppliers? What shared local infrastructure would help you relocalise your production processes?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Regenerate natural systems



12 **Circular Strategy** **Reconnect**

Principle: Regenerate natural systems

12 Reconnect “We are more than one”

For generations we've been encouraged to prove ourselves by “going it alone” and “standing on our own two feet”. However, connection is how we participate in both human and natural systems. Breaking down the barriers that prevent connection is key to activating the circular economy.

The business wins

One of the most exciting potentials of the circular economy is the concept of ‘nodes’ that bring enterprises together to localise their operations and share common resources, whilst keeping materials, knowledge and currency circling locally. Examples include: local abattoirs or bottle refill centres.

Reflections

What other local businesses or groups have similar unmet resourcing needs? What might be the benefits of coming together to create a ‘node’ that services this need? How might the wider social and cultural benefits of such a project attract external support and funding?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Regenerate natural systems



13

Circular Strategy

Renewable Energy

Principle: Regenerate natural systems

13 Renewable Energy “The gift that keeps on giving”

The extraction and burning of fossil fuels has been the engine powering the Take-Make-Waste linear economy. Making the switch to renewable energy is an essential step in the foundation of a circular economy, setting us on the path of meeting our energy needs within the limits of natural systems.

The business wins

Net-Zero businesses (whose energy use either produces zero greenhouse gas emissions or is offset to cancel out those emissions) stand out in the market as leaders in responsible practice and forward- thinking. Businesses and individuals can also generate and store their own renewable electricity, further reducing costs and improving resilience.

Reflections

Are you sourcing renewable energy to power your business production and operations? Could your business premises be generating and storing solar energy? What local renewable energy initiatives could you be part of?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Regenerate natural systems



14 Recognition

Circular Strategy

Principle: Regenerate natural systems

14 Recognition & Reconciliation “Wake up to Country”

First Nations cultures experience Country as a living essence, and this forms the basis of their long history of custodianship and intelligent collaboration with nature. Recognition honours Traditional Owners in this role, whilst also awakening us to our reciprocal kinship with the natural world.

The business wins

From a First Nations’ perspective the land and all the life within it are part of Country. The health of natural and human systems are thus intertwined. Our economic activities sit within that web of relationships. In Hepburn, recognition of Djaara culture and values helps promote wellbeing and abundance for all.

Reflections

How might you deepen your connection with Country and Djaara culture? How does your business support and respect Djaara cultural and economic development? Have you consulted the Dja Dja Wurrung Climate Change Strategy: Turning ‘wrong way’ climate, ‘right way’?

“What solutions might exist at each level: product, business and ecosystem?”

Principle: Regenerate natural systems