

ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SCIENTIST & ENGINEER

25 February 2019

NSW Network to Drive Innovation and Sustainability in Waste and Recycling

The NSW Government is investing \$1.5 million to establish a Circular Economy Innovation Network.

“A circular economy looks to minimise waste while ensuring that the valuable resources contained in waste and other discarded products are kept in use for as long as possible,” said NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte. “Maximising the use and value of these resources will bring major economic and environmental benefits to NSW.”

While technology exists to advance the Circular Economy, there is a lack of collaboration across the sector that inhibits innovation and the development of new processes and supply chains.

“The Network is aimed at better linking industry with government, local councils and researchers to provide an environment in NSW that is conducive to the adoption of new ways of tackling the challenges of the Circular Economy. It will create new revenue opportunities while maintaining a clear focus on sustainability and improved wellbeing,” said Professor Durrant-Whyte.

A driver for establishing the Network was a recommendation contained in the NSW Innovation and Productivity Council (IPC) Report, *Innovation in the NSW environmental goods and services sector*, released today. The Report can be found [\[REDACTED\]](#)

“The establishment of this Network will significantly benefit New South Wales,” said IPC Chair, Neville Stevens AO. “Economically, annual exports of NSW environmental goods and services are already worth \$3 billion. This is an exciting opportunity to build on our strong research and industry strengths to enhance our state’s current position as a market leader in the Asia-Pacific.”

“Regional NSW will benefit in terms of jobs and growth, due to the high proportion of these businesses located outside of our major cities. The environment will see improvement as well, as the Network helps to shape the state’s vision for reducing waste, driving sustainable recycling markets and identifying and improving the state regional waste infrastructure network.”

The Network will be hosted at UNSW Sydney and will boast the complementary expertise of universities across the state.

“We need to rethink attitudes to all of the materials we discard and start to see them as renewable resources if we want to live more sustainably,” said Professor Veena Sahajwalla, the Founding Director of UNSW’s Centre for Sustainable Materials Research & Technology and the new Director of the Network.

“The new NSW Circular Economy Innovation Network is crucial to start to bring together all of the relevant stakeholders, including small to medium enterprises, into a new supply chain that

can create value from these discarded materials, rather than for them to end up in landfill or valueless somewhere,” said Professor Sahajwalla.

The Network is funded from the NSW Government’s Research Attraction and Acceleration Program, operated by the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer.

The NSW Government has developed a Circular Economy Policy, which can be found [\[REDACTED\]](#).

Media: [\[REDACTED\]](#)