

Community Organisation Capability Building Program

Evaluation Report

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Community Organisation Capability Building Program: Evaluation Report

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List of Abbreviations

BC	Behaviour change
CCCEA	Community Climate Change Energy Action Program
CE	Circular Economy
CECF	Circular Economy: Communities Fund
COCP	Community Organisation Capability Building Program
DYH	Detox Your Home
FTE	Full time equivalent
SV	Sustainability Victoria

Executive Summary

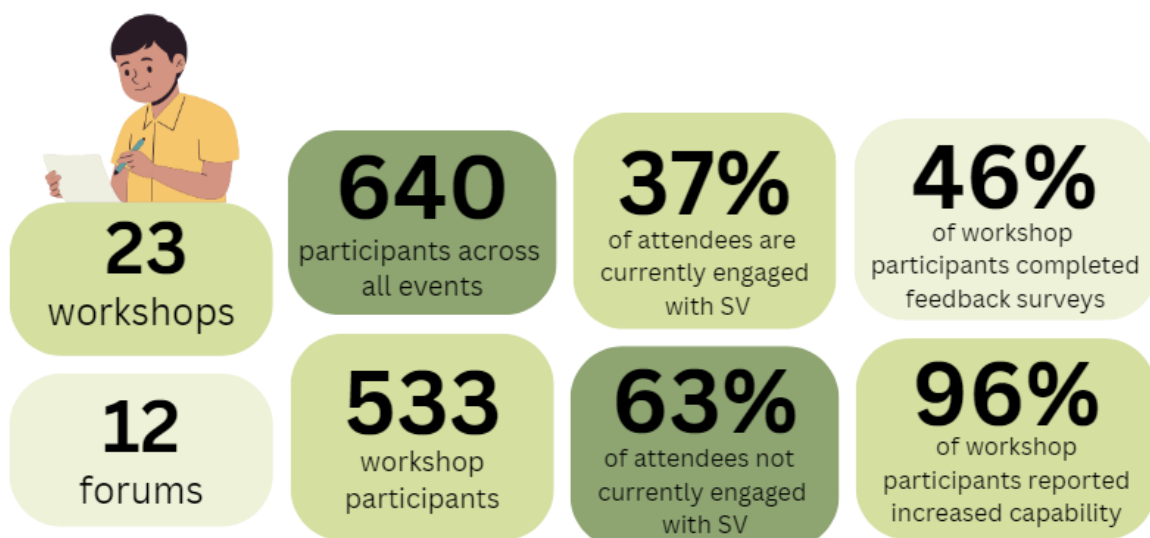
A transition to a Circular Economy (CE) is a key antidote to the nation's pattern of excessive consumption under the current linear economy. Grassroots, not-for profit, community organisations are important drivers in this transition.

The Community Organisation Capability Building Program (COCBP, or the Program) was established as a sub-program of the Circular Economy Communities Fund (CECF), recognising that community organisations required support above and beyond grant funding to enable their projects to thrive. Capabilities, in this context, are the qualities and attributes required of an organisation to effectively engage in sustainability, energy efficiency, or circular economy projects.

The Program operated on a modest budget of \$157,000¹, sourced from the Community Solutions fund. It delivered 23 education workshops, attended by 533 individuals. The program hosted 12 forums, producing 6 capability statements for specialised waste recovery streams. From this a Capability Kit resource was developed for organisations seeking to start or expand their sustainability projects. Furthermore, the Program was well-represented at 20 external events through networking, panels, and stalls.

The program's reach was enhanced by a 6-month extension to its timeline, allowing for more workshops in conjunction with the Regional Engagement team, refinement of resources, and iterative improvements based on feedback.

Figure 1. Summary of select Program outcomes.



The Program effectively achieved most of its objectives. The level of engagement and the number of events exceeded targets, receiving positive feedback from attendees (Figure 1). Most surveyed attendees (96%) felt that the program's workshops increased their capabilities. With a survey response rate of 46% among workshop attendees, feedback received was considered representative of attendee experience.

The participation target for community speakers was not met due to reimbursement issues and a shift in workshop focus. Similarly, the target for delivering events in conjunction with Detox Your Home (DYH) was not met due to the events interfering with standard DYH operation by causing congestion at these sites.

¹ Staff resourcing costs not included. This was funded directly from the CECF budget.

Overall, the program was overwhelmingly well-received by participants, many of whom expressed a desire for further sessions, more in-depth learning, or to engage in a network with like-minded attendees.

Program design was fit for purpose. The balance of face-to-face and online sessions, prioritising engagement, and addressing accessibility concerns, were generally well-reasoned and struck a good balance. However, there were missed opportunities in engaging CALD and First Nations groups, indicating room for improvement in inclusivity strategies. The Program's design strongly aligns with SV's 3-year strategy (2024-2027) focus of "Making it easier for industry and communities to take part in circular behaviours that will increase participation." The Program has laid a foundation for the success of this focus area in the coming years by allowing communities to build capability and act autonomously in the absence of grant program support.

The budget for the Program was \$157,000, sourced from the Circular Economies Community Fund (CECF) budget. This did not include staff resourcing costs which were sourced from the Community Solutions team. With an average of 1.47 Full time equivalent (FTE) staff members working on the program, total staff salaries amounted to around \$300,000 over the delivery period. These costs were also considered when assessing the Program's budget efficiency. Overall, the Program was determined to be good value for money, far exceeding its engagement targets and receiving favourable feedback from attendees.

The program has had limited opportunities to share its findings with the broader SV community and the executive leadership team. The development of the Capability Kit extended until the program's conclusion, leaving insufficient time to publish the resource and receive feedback from relevant stakeholders. There has not been enough time to see the changes over time with organisations applying their learnings from the program, hence, evaluation has looked at their perceived confidence in applying these techniques, and intention to, in the future.

Producing a comprehensive Capability Kit resource for community organisations is an efficient approach to building capability without ongoing time investment from SV. If popular amongst community organisations, the Kit will ensure the Program has an ongoing positive impact on organisation capability. The program's success within such a small budget demonstrated effective resource utilisation, supported by strategic planning and collaboration within the SV Community Solutions team. The close of the Program is not the end of the capability-building story, with certain measures required to continue the legacy of the strong foundation the COCP program has built. These recommendations seek to extend the reach of the current Program and ensure that any future programs fill any gaps that remain in the space.

Recommendations

- The longevity of the Program's impact is highly contingent on effective communication and use of findings within SV and accessible information for community organisations. To ensure this, some resource investment will be required beyond program close.
- Future capability building work designs and executes a dedicated engagement plan for working with CALD and First Nations groups to ensure their needs are met. Further to this, a broader SV strategy for First Nations engagement is required to assist with forming meaningful connections with First Nations community groups, especially following the recent closure of local Aboriginal networks.
- The Community Solutions team collects ongoing feedback on the Capability Kit following its publication to measure appropriateness and impact. Characterising the value of such resources will strengthen future cases for further investment in capability building.

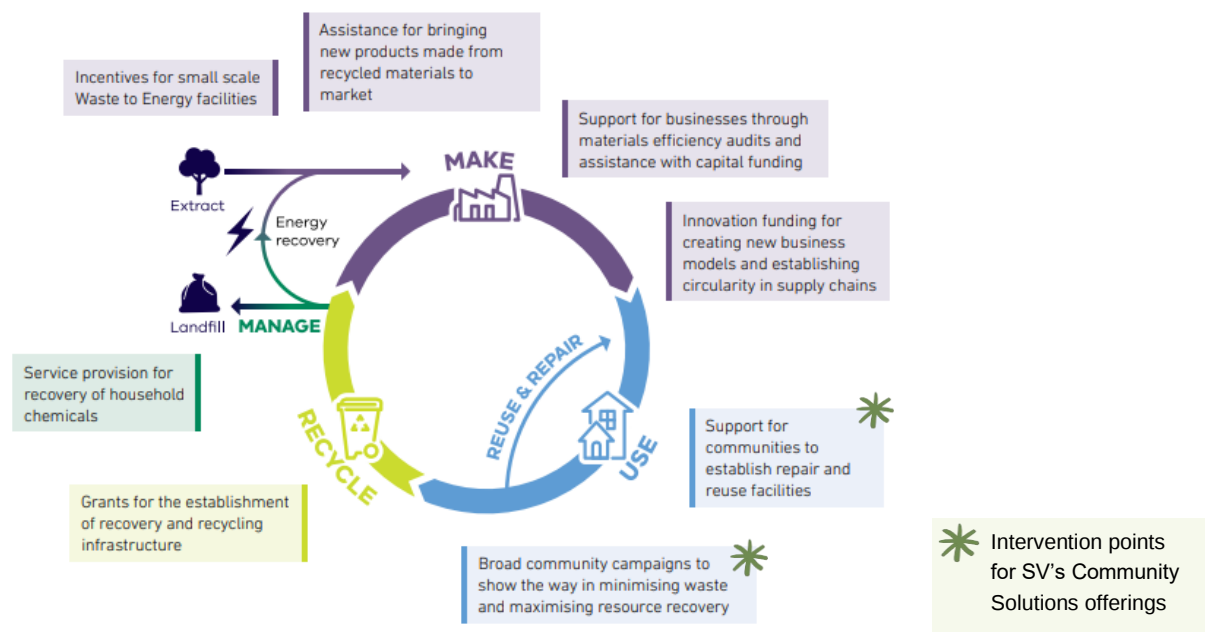
A guide for evaluating the long-term impact of COCP can be found on Pg 34.

Background

The human ecological footprint is ever increasing, with Earth needing 1.5 years to replenish what we consume annually. Australia's consumption patterns would require over 4 Earths, showing how unsustainable our practices are. This highlights the urgent need for developed countries like Australia to shift from a linear to a circular economy.

A circular economy (CE) describes a system of how we can use our resources in a more sustainable way. It focuses on keeping materials in use for as long as possible, designing out waste and pollution, and regenerating natural systems.

Figure 2. Visualisation of a Circular Economy.²

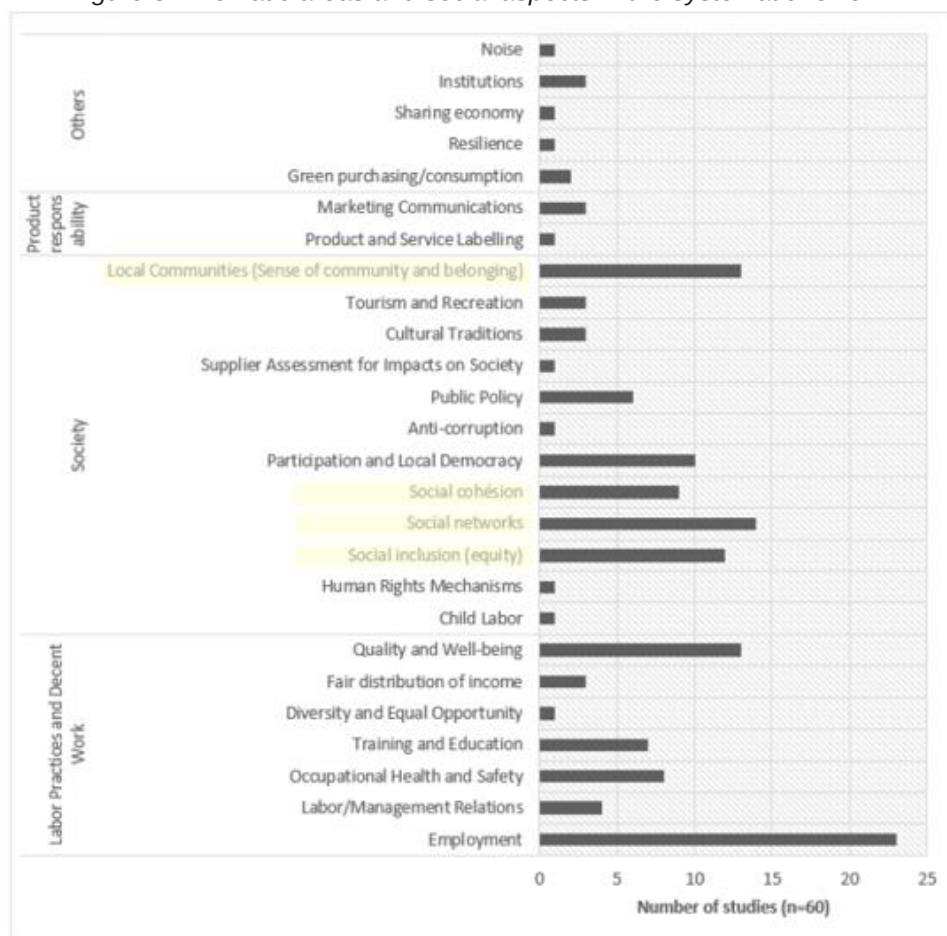


A systems perspective of the CE transition focusses on the interplay of environmental, economic, and social aspects of the transition from a linear economy. The social dimension is least studied within the literature, but there is an emerging understanding of the role of, and dynamics between, communities, organisations, and governments to drive the CE transition.

Padilla-Rivera et al. (2020) conducted a systematic literature review of the social aspects of the CE. Their thematic analysis indicated that concepts of sense of community and belonging, social cohesion and local communities occurred frequently within the reviewed studies, second only to employment (Figure 3). The role of institutions and government was a less salient, but notable, theme within the literature, in recognising these institutions provide the tools and policies for CE transition.

² SV2030, image sourced from Recycling Victoria.

Figure 3. Thematic areas and social aspects in the systematic review.³



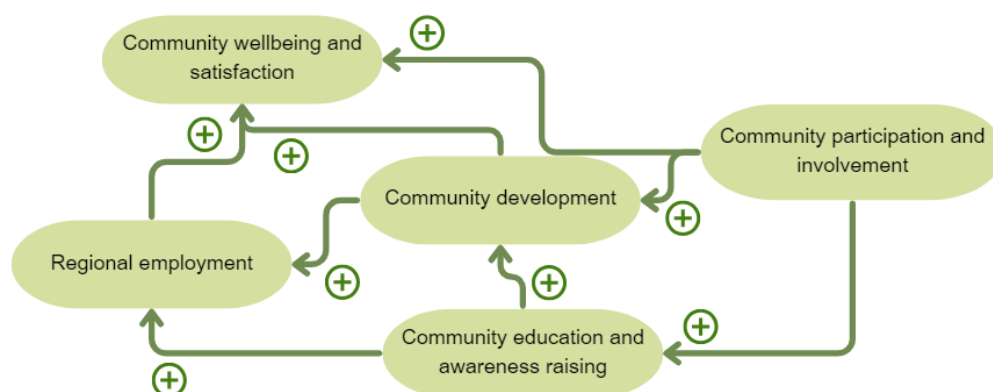
Local community involvement is critical for the success of CE projects.⁴ Opportunities for community members to participate in the planning process promotes empowerment and influences the acceptance of, and attitudes towards, CE activities within the community. Community involvement further enhances social inclusion and equity within communities, particularly with the inclusion of marginalised groups.

Government support through education, awareness raising measures and financing contributes to local empowerment and social cohesion as well as creating local job opportunities and place-based interventions. The diagram in Figure 4 illustrates the key connections within a community that is actively involved in CE) activities. The arrows in the diagram indicate the direction of positive feedback loops within the system.

³ Padilla-Rivera, Alejandro, Sara Russo-Garrido, and Nicolas Merveille. "Addressing the social aspects of a circular economy: A systematic literature review." *Sustainability* 12.19 (2020): 7912.

⁴ Mies, A., & Gold, S. (2021). Mapping the social dimension of the circular economy. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 321, 128960.

Figure 4. Causal loop diagram of local community related aspects in CE. Adapted and simplified from Mies & Gold (2021).



The promotion of local community participation and employment opportunities in CE initiatives are central leverage points to improve collective attitudes toward CE and sustainability actions, as well as positive attitudes towards the Victorian State Government and Sustainability Victoria (SV).

Rationale

Community organisations play a pivotal role in promoting an energy-efficient CE locally but face significant capability barriers such as limited knowledge, insufficient training, and a lack of collaboration. The rationale for the COCP is that SV is well-positioned to address these challenges, ensuring the long-term success of community organisations.

Possessing extensive knowledge in CE and sustainability practices, SV can up-skill community organisations and empower them with the necessary expertise and understanding to implement effective CE initiatives. Furthermore, SV's strong relationships with various community organisations enable it to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing, creating a cohesive and integrated approach to local sustainability efforts.

Government investment in capability-building will benefit the State's CE transition. Successful sustainability ventures by local community organisations will substantially contribute to the State's circular economy goals, empower communities to make positive changes, and encourage behaviour change at a community and individual level. Since the Program's commencement, SV has published a 3-year (2024-2027) strategic plan. The Program strongly aligns with the plan's focus area of making it easier for industry and communities to take part in circular behaviours. Upskilling and providing ongoing resources to community organisations will enhance their ability to autonomously progress sustainability initiatives and the CE. The Program's content is poised to assist organisations to overcome barriers, expand their projects and engage more effectively with the local community.

Quantitative outcome summary

Table 1. COCP performance: target and actual outcomes (total)

Description	Indicator	Code	Target	Actual	Discussion
To what extent did the program allow community groups to lead the activities with content and their insights?	Number of educational/information products developed	I008	8 presenters from community	6 presenters from community	Target not met (Variance= -25%) due to shift in the type of events being conducted by the Program and the challenge of reimbursing speakers. Events shifted to smaller groups where the benefits of participation were interaction with each other.
Did the program deliver minimum of 9 total forums and workshops?	Number of education/information sessions	I009	9 forums/workshops	35 forums/workshops	Target exceeded (Variance= +289%), key contributors were the extended timeline and collaboration with the Regional Engagement team to enable broader reach.
Did the program deliver minimum of 3 of these workshops to coincide with the Detox Your Home events?	Number of education/information sessions	I009	3 workshops	2 workshops	Target not met (Variance= -33%) due to DYH events generally being oversubscribed. The contribution of a workshop in tandem with a DYH event would cause excess congestion, hence these were only able to run at low attendance sites.
What was the level of uptake or engagement in the program from SV funded organisations?	Number of people attending training or receiving support	I010	45 funded organisations represented in cumulated attendance data across all activity types	192 ⁵	Target exceeded (Variance= +326%), key contributors were tailoring the workshop topics to community interests, strong promotion of the workshops, volume of workshops delivered and appetite of the community.
What was the level of uptake or engagement in the program from organisations that have not previously been funded by SV or engaged with SV?	Number of community members participating in sustainability related initiatives	I053	15 unfunded organisations represented in cumulated attendance data across all activity types	324	Target exceeded (Variance= +2060%), key contributors were tailoring the workshop topics to community interests, strong promotion of the workshops, volume of workshops delivered and appetite of the community.
What was the participant representation across Metro, regional and rural Victoria?	Number of people attending training or receiving support	I010	Split 70% Metro, 30% Regional ⁶	67% Metro, 33% Regional	Target exceeded. The key aim of this target to ensure equity and maximise regional engagement by meeting a benchmark of 30% of attendees being from regional areas. This success of this target is attributed to the efforts in organising and promoting regional masterclasses.
Did workshops improve participant capability to act on climate change?	% participants in training/events reporting improved capability	I054	50%	96% ⁷	Target exceeded. Participants were not explicitly asked to report improved capability in feedback survey, with various similar questions substituted to determine this outcome. See footnote for method and rationale.

⁵ Attendance and survey data did not reliably capture individual's organisational affiliation, only known values are included (N=516), likely representing an underestimate for both funded and unfunded organisations.

⁶ Calculated as in-person attendance at metro- or regional-based masterclasses.

⁷ Different cohorts were given different feedback surveys, and not asked about capability explicitly, necessitating a flexible approach to defining the outcome. Increased capability was defined as participants reporting being very confident or having improved confidence in applying workshop learnings or selecting "Other" and giving a positive response (N=223, 96%). Fifteen responses were excluded from reporting for not asking an analogous question.

Program design

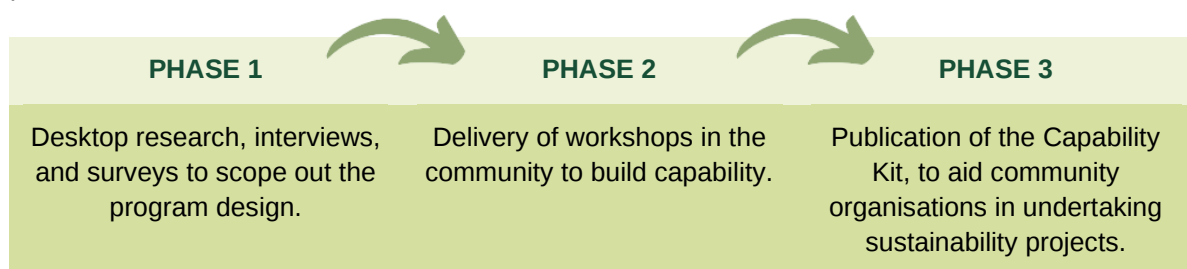
Many community organisations, in their efforts to promote an energy-efficient circular economy at the local level, face a range of capability barriers.

While SV can potentially help to build this capability, the challenge is compounded by the diverse nature of stakeholders. This diversity leads to numerous potential capability-building initiatives, each influenced by factors like organisation size, maturity, and external challenges such as bushfires, COVID-19, and economic fluctuations. Organisations are further constrained by limited time and resources. Any government intervention must be collaborative rather than authoritarian.

The COCP aims to develop tailored guidance tools that address the unique needs of these organisations, thereby building capability while reaching a wide audience. Looking ahead, with the support of the COCP, the objective is to see an increased number of community organisations effectively driving place-based transition activities, enhancing connectivity and collaboration, embracing community diversity, and ensuring sustainability across various efforts like advocacy, community engagement, and project delivery.

The COCP was created in the recognition that funding alone can't sustain the transition of Victorian communities to a circular zero-net economy by 2030. Community groups need capability enhancements for short-term funding to lead to lasting outcomes, requiring SV to research specific capability gaps within these groups.

The COCP had a detailed program logic that significantly influenced the initial program design. The Program was designed to be delivered over three phases, with each phase contingent on the previous:



Scoping in the first phase of the program helped broaden the team's understanding of what capabilities existed within community, those which needed building, and how to engage with community organisations. Overall, the design of the program was informed by a wealth of key stakeholders from within SV and the community. A detailed description of each program phase can be found in Program Delivery (Page 17).

Program Context

The COCP sits within the Community Solutions arm of SV. The program collaborates with other programs within Community Solutions to gather data on, and engage with, community-based initiatives and organisations undertaking CE or energy efficiency projects.

The composition of Community Solutions is illustrated in Figure 5. Table 2 summarises the programs contributing to the COCP sample and knowledge base.

Figure 5. Programs contributing to COCP's knowledge base (at July 2023).



Table 2. Summary of Community Solutions program offerings during COCP's operation.

Program	Status	Description	Contribution to COCP
Detox Your Home (DYH)	Program ongoing	Program provides a network of sites for Victorians to dispose of unwanted household chemicals and other hazardous materials.	• Minor source of funding • Delivered 2 capability building workshops in conjunction with DYH events.
Community Climate Change Energy Action Program (CCCEA)	Program concluded September 2023	Program provided audit and infrastructure grants to enable Victorian community organisations to improve the energy efficiency of their buildings.	• Some grant recipients surveyed as part of Phase 1 scoping.
Circular Economy Communities Fund (CECF)	Program ongoing	Program provides grants to community groups undertaking Circular Economy projects	• Major source of funding • Some grant recipients surveyed as part of Phase 1 scoping. • Some grant recipients invited to advise on forums.

Link to CECF Program

The objective of the CECF is to assist Victorian communities to transition to a circular economy by providing grants programs to solicit creative solutions for issues and gaps in the current waste management systems. The COCP aligns with, and complements, this objective through building capability in community organisations through education and resources to maximise the effectiveness of their grant funding or seek solutions independent of SV's financial support.

Program objectives

The COCP's program objectives, derived from the program logic, are to:

- Improve organisations' capability for achieving sustainability outcomes.
- Drive effective circular economy activities across organisations.
- Develop and provide accessible resources for long-term action in sustainability.
- Promote diversity in funded projects and engage diverse community groups.
- Foster ongoing local action and momentum towards circular economy goals.
- Use insights to inform future programs, especially with CALD and First Nations groups.
- Support SV2030 Working Group in budget development for a circular zero-net economy by 2030.

Alignment with SV's 3-year strategy

The COCP aligns with SV's 3-year strategy (2024-2027) focus area of "Making it easier for industry and communities to take part in circular behaviours that will increase participation."

The program seeks to increase the understanding of the circular economy and how community organisations engage with it, while also building their confidence and competence to educate the broader Victorian community.

The program achieves these goals by facilitating knowledge accrual and exchange, fostering networking among community groups, and building their capabilities. It provides resources to establish circular economy projects and plays a crucial role in educating the community on the behaviours necessary for a successful and functioning circular economy.

Link to SV2030

The COCP aligns with SV2030's Focus Area 3:

Community Action



Place-based projects and programs

We work with the Victorian community, individuals, neighbourhoods, councils, and regions - to develop place-based projects, programs and working hubs covering a range of environmental Initiatives.

Together with the Victorian Government and other partners, SV will foster a network across Victoria to inspire communities to create a common vision and turn visions into action through facilitated workshops and with ongoing support from SV - resources and learnings will be shared across communities to fast track our transition to a new economy.

Program assumptions

During program design, the COCP relied on a set of assumptions that would facilitate the success of the program. These assumptions are summarised in Table 3. Assumptions will become a key aspect

of the evaluation when considering whether they were met and, if not, how this impacted the program's performance.

Table 3. Assumptions during COCP design.

Assumption	Type
Community organisations possess a clear understanding of their capabilities and limitations, enabling them to discern what they can realistically achieve.	Stakeholder
SV possesses sufficient ongoing resources to enable this program to continue.	Internal (Financial)
Peak bodies are expected to play a supportive role in distributing surveys to ensure an adequate number of responses are obtained, with a target response rate of 30%.	Stakeholder
Volunteers have the necessary time and willingness to participate in program activities.	Stakeholder
Community organisations with the requisite capability and capacity are willing to share their knowledge with SV and other stakeholders.	Stakeholder

Whilst all programs are built on a set of assumptions, as evidenced by the table above, the success of COCP Program is highly contingent on the assumptions of willing participation from their target audience.

Program budget

The Community Capability Building Program was allocated \$157,000 via the CECF. This allocation was directed towards program activities and needed to be fully expended before the end date of the CECF i.e. 30 September 2024⁸. This program budget excludes staff resourcing, with those costs managed by the Community Solutions Manager through the ongoing SV financial reporting, see Table 5 for an estimate. Since the Program was a line item in the CECF program budget, reserved for capability activities, it did not have a budget breakdown on commencement of delivery.

Financial summary

The Program is on track to close within budget. Financial acquittal was not completed in time for inclusion in the Program's evaluation. The allocation of staff resources to the Program was estimated by the Community Solutions manager to give an indicative cost (Table 5).

Table 4. Estimated staff resource costs managed by the CECF budget.⁹

Role	Time period	FTE	Salary total
Program lead	19 months	1 (10 months) 0.5 (4 months) 0.4 (5 months)	\$155,403
Team lead	9 months	0.2	\$15,822
Manager	10 months	0.2	\$21,563
Regional engagement lead	9 months	0.2 (4 months) 0.405 (5 months)	\$111,210
Total			\$303,998

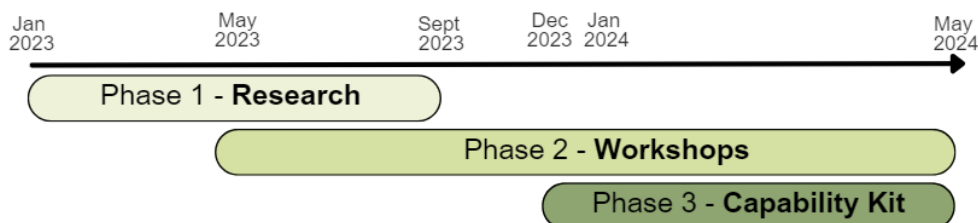
⁸ The Q3 Sus Fund report for the CE Communities Fund provides formal reference on this allocation.

⁹ Estimates based on base VPS salaries effective 1 March 2023 and FTE estimates provided by the Community Solutions manager.

Program delivery

The Program was initially scheduled to be delivered within the 2023 calendar year, but resource reallocation enabled the extension of the delivery period to the end of May 2024 to maximise the COCP's activities.

Figure 6. Actual timeline for the COCP phases.



Phase 1: Research

The program design phase included consultation within SV and with external stakeholders, reviewing internal documents and data.

The COCP conducted interviews with over 20 SV staff members spanning across various teams such as Grants, CEBIC, Regional partnerships, Education, and Social Impact, along with external stakeholders. A summary of the interview participants is available in Figure 7. These interviews were aimed at defining the program's capabilities and its target audience, the services it would offer, ways to support existing SV projects, and strategies to engage with specific demographics. This understanding was gathered by exploring the interviewees' roles within SV or their external organisations and how the program's future design could complement their work. These interviews played a crucial role in mapping SV's current landscape and optimising the Program's scope.

The insights gathered were used in the design of the program, which was co-designed by the COCP working group.

Figure 7. Interviews conducted during Phase 1 of program design.



CCCEA interviews

The Program reached out to a representative group of grant recipients from the Community Climate Change and Energy Action (CCCEA) program to participate in a capability survey. CCCEA grant recipients were community organisations using the grant funds to improve the energy efficiency of their operating sites through completing energy upgrades. Eleven grant recipients completed the interview. Questions asked about their experience with the grant process, their organisation's current capabilities, areas they wished to improve in or focus more on and how they engage with their community. These responses contributed to the knowledge base for designing the capability workshops and Capability Kit.

COCP Working Group

The Program's working group operated during early program design and delivery. The working group utilised co-design principles to gather insights from forums, trial workshops, interviews, and case studies, shaping future activities to ensure the program provided practical support for community groups.

Membership consisted of a combination of individuals involved in capability or related SV programs, along with community organisation members who were invited through expression of interest.

Whilst the Working Group applied principles of co-design, it did not function as a decision-making or endorsing body. Instead, it served as a hybrid government/community group forum to represent the views of community groups and organisations, share information, provide feedback, and optimise the program with an emphasis on the diverse community groups across Victoria. It also defined proposed activities and recommended relevant partners outside of government for this work.

The Working Group met 12 times between March 2023 and January 2024.

Phase 2: Workshops

The COCP hosted two distinct types of events:

Workshops aimed to educate and build capability within community organisations to engage in sustainability projects.

Forums were an information gathering exercise that enabled established community organisations to share their role within the community, their experience, and challenges to running a sustainability project to build material for the COCP's Capability Kit.

As such, this evaluation characterised forums as incoming information and workshops as outgoing information from SV (see Figure 8). This will become important when defining the Program's measures of effectiveness.

Figure 8. Knowledge exchange within COCP.



Workshops focussed on educating attendees about behaviour change, circular economy, hazardous chemical management and establishing sustainability projects.

Forums brought together organisations with similar roles and capabilities within in the community to share their learnings to build a picture of the barriers and enablers within sustainability projects.

All events hosted by COCP are summarised in Appendix A.

Broader COCP engagement

Beyond the core COCP events, the program lead undertook a number of networking and engagement opportunities to raise awareness of the Program and liaise with stakeholders. The Program was represented at 20 external events over the course of delivery. Building these relationships at external events enabled recruitment to future forums and workshops, as well as increasing visibility of proactive government involvement in building capability in the community sector.

Appendix B summarises COCP representation at external events.

Phase 3: Capability Resources

Special Interest Forums

Organisations with established sustainability projects were consulted during Phase 3 to develop the Capability Kit, a key deliverable of the Program.

These organisations were allocated to 6 streams (right) based the services they provided. Each stream a forum wherein participating organisations introduced their program's offerings and discussed the challenges and barriers they encounter engaging with the public and delivering their services.

Many of these pain points were unique to the given stream, for example, the special waste recovery stream struggled with a heavy reliance on specialised machinery for their processing needs.



“Great to hear about everyone's projects - learning from each other is extremely useful.”

Participant, capability stream forums

For each of these streams, a capability statement was developed which drew out key themes from the stakeholder interviews tailored to the unique challenges and circumstances of each project stream. These statements were given a contractor to develop the capability toolkit to adapt into accessible information for organisations. A follow-up feedback forum was held for each stream, enabling contributing organisations to review the draft Capability Kit.

Forums were conducted between September 2023 and May 2024.

The basis of these capability statements sought to assist organisations to:

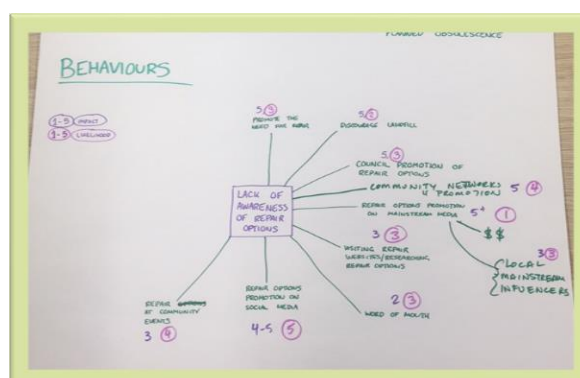
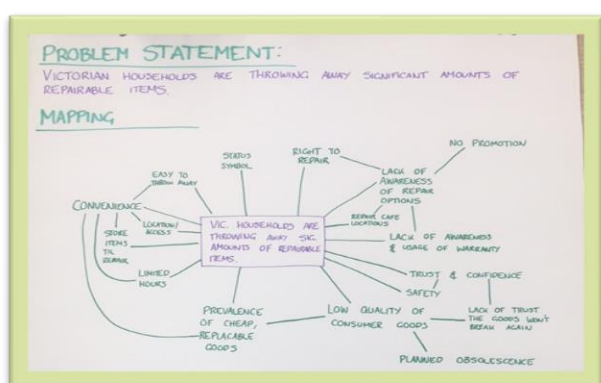
- Define activities for engagement.
- Create a structured plan for effective engagement.
- Apply behaviour change theories.
- Efficiently run the program.
- Use accessible information.
- Offer training and distribute learning materials.
- Develop future processes based on insights.
- Manage risks and uphold Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).
- Encourage collaboration among various programs and organisations.
- Equip staff to write successful funding applications.



Capability Kit

The Capability Kit is a “How to guide” for organisations looking to undertake circular economy initiatives. The document will provide tailored instructions for each of the six different waste streams¹⁰ and complementary case studies. A communications plan is currently (June 2024) being developed for the Kit’s launch in the coming months. When published, the kit will be a public resource on the SV website for community members to access.

(Pictures below) Brainstorming from the Hard Waste special interest forum which contributed to the development of the Capability Kit.



¹⁰ Repair cafes, bicycle repair, food waste prevention, food waste composting, hard & textile waste, and special waste.

Stakeholder feedback

Workshops organised through the COCP conducted a detailed survey of participant experience, including feedback on how future sessions could be improved. The post-workshop surveys asked a series of structured questions to workshop attendees (Behaviour change workshops N= 218, Circular economy workshop N= 14, Setting up a sustainability project series N=15). Overall survey completion rate was 247 of 533, or 46%, of workshop attendees.

Figure 9. Quantitative survey responses from workshops.



When asked how the sessions could be improved, the feedback was largely positive, with respondents expressing an appetite for more similar content in the future.

Circular economy workshop attendees were looking for more connection with their peers, with suggestions of commencing the workshop with introductions and icebreakers and allocating time for group problem solving. There was also a desire for more detailed information: a reference list, specific examples of circular strategies, information on the Victorian government's CE strategy and a deep dive into the five circular approaches mentioned. The feedback reflected an engaged cohort, who were motivated to network and go beyond the session's initial offerings. Future workshops could expand on this content, or run for longer, to enable the dissemination of this information.

Behaviour change workshop feedback highlighted a strong appreciation for the workshop's dynamic and practical sessions, effective presenter, and well-organised layout. However, participants expressed a need for longer sessions or additional days to delve deeper into discussions, individual projects, and theoretical content.

Specific feedback from the metro workshops included a desire for a hardcopy of the content for ease of sharing with their organisation, more active guidance from facilitators, small group discussions for local expertise and more content tailored towards small community groups.

From the regional workshops, many respondents expressed the last session (after lunch) felt rushed. Content could be restructured to balance pacing. More detailed information on behaviour influences, in-depth case studies, and practical examples were requested, alongside a desire for follow-up or advanced sessions.

Breaks and networking time were appreciated but could be increased. Logistical improvements like microphones, name tags, larger screens, workbooks, and tables for note-taking were suggested. There were also calls for more participant engagement, feedback opportunities, and creating a community of practice for ongoing support.

Behaviour change workshop testimonials

"I would highly recommend this program. It has increased my understanding of how to implement projects more effectively."

"I often have little optimism going into 'corporate' workshops, but this was engaging, genuine and actually meaningful. It's a welcome change to not be bombarded with a bunch of non-specific words and to have engaging visuals making concepts easy to understand."

"This session was interactive, easy to grasp concepts and provided time to explore our own ideas and how to tackle them. Thank you very much."

"It was a fantastic way to rethink how we work with and try to influence behaviour in a really practical way. Really recommend anybody trying to make a positive difference to do this workshop."

"Eye opening look at how actions and influence can be understood in a community setting."

"It was a super valuable workshop. It built up my confidence to know how to approach campaigns and promotions aimed at influencing change in the community."

Evaluation methodology

The COCP did not have an established Memorandum of Understanding specifying evaluation metrics and reporting requirements. Thus, evaluation questions and metrics had to be set by the program and evaluation teams early in the evaluation period.

Careful consideration was given to establishing quantitative outcomes independently of the program's current or projected accomplishments; these were primarily based on proposed figures from a draft evaluation plan developed by the program team in early 2023.

Qualitative evaluation questions were derived from the draft evaluation plan's content and the COCP program logic formulated during the program's planning phase. Key evaluation questions were categorised into three domains: appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency. Whenever feasible, these outcomes were aligned with Sustainability Fund outcomes for future ease of comparison with similar programs.

The evaluation team compiled data from forums and workshops, encompassing attendance records, stakeholder feedback, lessons learnt, one-on-one interviews with the program team, and internal documents, to carry out the evaluation.

Appropriateness

In this section we assess suitability of the program's design and implementation in meeting its desired objectives to:

- Improve community organisations' capability for achieving sustainability outcomes.
- Drive effective circular economy activities across organisations.
- Develop and provide accessible resources for long-term action in sustainability.
- Promote diversity in funded projects and engage diverse community groups.
- Foster ongoing local action and momentum towards circular economy goals.
- Use insights to inform future programs, especially with CALD and First Nations groups.
- Support SV2030 Working Group in budget development for a circular zero-net economy by 2030.

Program design

A key question of appropriateness was whether the program design was best suited to delivering the desired objectives. The program aimed to conduct educational sessions for the wider community, ensuring broad outreach, engaging minority groups, and facilitating networking among participants. The chosen format was largely face-to-face workshops and forums at various locations across Victoria, with a few online workshops to accommodate those who could not make the face-to-face events.

Potential alternatives were fully online workshops, which could lower transport and catering costs and improve accessibility, yet they might be less engaging and limit networking, particularly for technologically limited participants. Another option was an online self-guided module, which would require development costs, might be more interactive, but could also exclude technologically limited participants and limit networking opportunities.

Reflecting on the initial planning stages, the Program Lead acknowledged that earlier engagement with stakeholders would have been beneficial. The evaluation team concurs. Although the six months of planning were valuable, initiating outreach sooner would have fostered stronger relationships. A key limitation in evaluating the Program has been its delivery timeline, with workshops still ongoing and the Capability Kit in draft form at the time of evaluation. This evidence strongly supports the need for earlier engagement to kickstart many components of the Program.

Despite the program's expenses for staff transport, venue rental, and catering, the benefits of face-to-face interaction and engagement outweigh these costs. Some online sessions were also conducted, addressing accessibility concerns. The chosen program design struck a good balance, making it the most appropriate option, though it would have benefitted from earlier engagement.

Program content

The Program delivered 18 behaviour change workshops, 2 CE workshops and 3 workshops on establishing a sustainability project. The choice of workshop topics was informed by in-house capabilities and topics that community organisations indicated they would be interested in. Whilst this was a sensible use of resources, the Program Lead noted that it would have been valuable to target areas of how community organisations can show value from their work (data collection and evaluation). There was not sufficient time or resources to develop such a program within the delivery of COCP, but this presents an opportunity for future work.

[The workshop was] very well structured, use of time, good interaction. Delivery was excellent.

– Regional workshop attendee

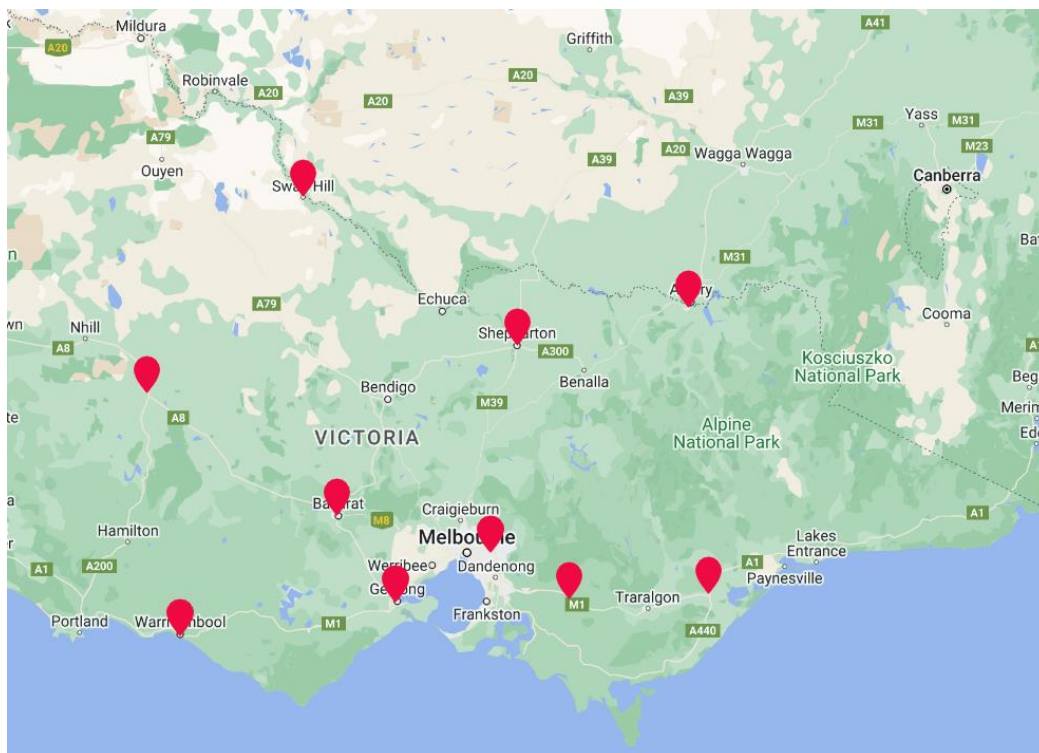
The structure of the workshops was largely praised by participants in survey feedback, with consensus that the workshops delivered engaging and novel content, allowed time for questions and networking with other attendees.

Equity and reach

This section considers whether the opportunity to engage with the program was equitably distributed to all Victorians involved in community level sustainability work.

It is evident the COCP made it a priority to collaborate with SV's Regional Engagement Team to guarantee that workshops would effectively reach community organisations in regional areas. Figure 10 illustrates the distribution of workshops conducted in the regions during Phase 3. By extending these workshops to regional locations, COCP ensured that communities outside metropolitan areas had equal access to high-quality program delivery, thus maintaining geographic equity.

Figure 10. Locations of regional workshops delivered in Phase 3 of the COCP.¹¹

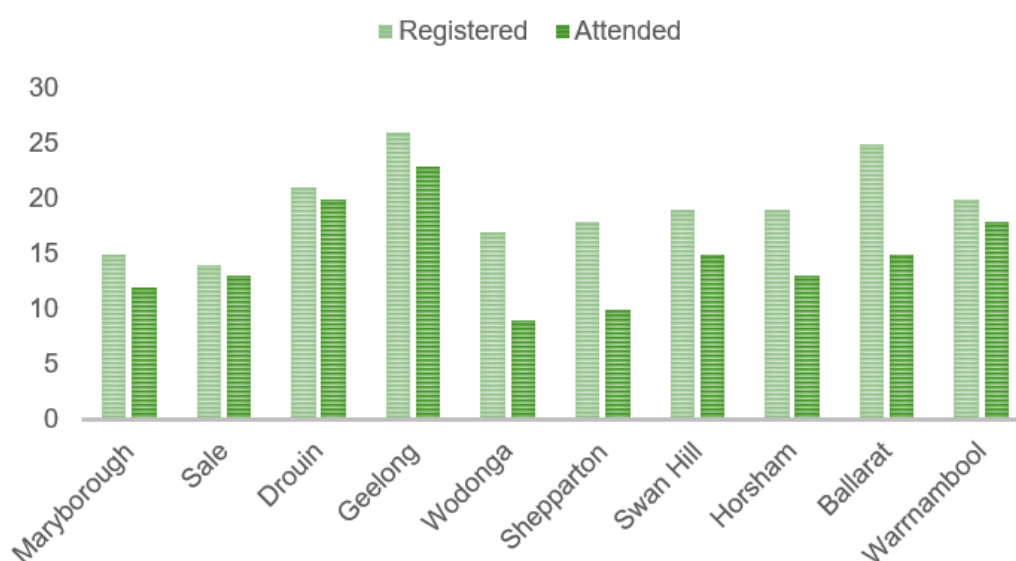


The Program had an target to have at least 30% of in-person workshop participants attending regional workshops. The workshops held in regional Victoria saw a strong turnout from local community organisations (see Figure 11), surpassing the program's target with 33% representation from the

¹¹ The Nunawading workshop, included on this map, was allocated as a Metro-based workshop.

regions among in-person attendees. The regional workshop series¹² accounted for 148 of 443 total in-person attendees.

Figure 11. Regional workshop participation (registered vs. attended).



Whilst the program consulted broadly with various community organisations in their forums and workshops, there was not much engagement with or participation from CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) and First Nations groups. This is despite reaching and involving these groups being a key goal of the Program's initial design. This presents an opportunity for improvement, such as proactively reaching out to these organisations through an expression of interest process at the program's outset to ensure their representation and input throughout the development and implementation phases. This proactive approach could have enhanced inclusivity and better reflect the diverse needs and perspectives of the community.

The Program team reflected in their Lessons Learnt session that there were insufficient resources to develop a First Nations engagement strategy on top of the Program's existing commitments. Given the emphasis SV has placed on working towards engaging effectively with First Nations organisations, programs with these intended outcomes should scope First Nations engagement early in the planning process, and reserve budget to ensure these goals can be realised.

Iterative learning

The Program collected feedback from workshop participants over the course of their delivery. These surveys yielded valuable insights into whether the events were fit-for-purpose and allowed participants to suggest areas for improvement in future presentations. The Program team were reportedly proactive in reviewing and applying the suggestions from the survey feedback in future workshops, though there was notably little constructive feedback to apply, with high satisfaction for the workshop offerings.

Resources and long-term impacts

The Program has put together a Capability Kit tailored for community organisations. Since it has only recently been developed, and not yet published, it has not been tested on the intended audience.

¹² The Werribee masterclass was cancelling due to low event registrations and replaced with a Melbourne-based in-person workshop held on 07/06/2024 with 23 attendees. This and the Nunawading workshop were excluded from the total due being metro-based.

Now, the focus should be on ensuring these resources are easily accessible and gathering feedback to assess their suitability. Assessing the appropriateness of the final Capability Kit at this stage is difficult given it has not been in the hands of its intended audience, with no feedback mechanisms put in place yet. Whilst draft iterations were reviewed by the forums who initially contributed information to build the kit, these organisations represent established sustainability projects. Their needs from the Capability Kit may be less than an organisation at the start of their sustainability journey and hence they may rate the Kit as more appropriate where other audiences may find it lacks key information.

Prioritising the early development and publication of the Capability Kit may have allowed for a more cohesive program delivery overall, as participants of the workshops could be directed to the resource for broader support beyond that provided in the session. The window of opportunity to build on workshop learnings and maintain momentum may be short, with the publication of the Kit not yet finalised, the intended audience may be diminished or less engaged.

Effectiveness

Program effectiveness measures how well a program achieves its intended outcomes and objectives, often through quantitative and qualitative measures. In the absence of a formal MoU, these outcomes were sourced from the COCP's program logic and draft evaluation plan developed by the program team.

Quantitative outcomes

The quantitative outcomes set out by the Program broadly fall into 3 categories; how much the Program delivered, who the program engaged and whether capability building occurred.

How much the Program delivered is a reflection of the program team's management of timelines and logistics. Firstly, the Program sought to empower community organisations to drive sustainability efforts through learning and sharing their own knowledge. To this end, the Program aimed to host 8 presenters from the community to participate in COCP workshops and forums and share with their peers. Ultimately, 6 presenters featured in the Program, falling short of their target. As the Program evolved, events became smaller and more interactive for participants, rather than focussing on a keynote speaker. This was an effort to increase engagement and connectedness for those involved. A second contributor to this variance was the major risk identified by the working group of the complexities of reimbursing community speakers due to SV's financial policies and integrity considerations. Whilst the target for speakers was not met, substantial knowledge sharing occurred between participants in the community of practice forums and masterclasses.

A target of 9 forums or workshops was set during the planning phase, before the timeline extension allowed for more workshops and the participation of the Regions team. The Program far exceeded this target, with 35 forums and workshops delivered overall. Whilst this variance can be partially explained by the addition of 6 months to program delivery, it is also a testament to the organisational capabilities of the program team, with the volume of workshops delivered in the last few months of the Program far exceeding that of the previous year combined.

The Program aimed to leverage audiences at Detox Your Home events by providing a minimum of 3 tailored masterclasses. Though theoretically viable, the team encountered logistical issues, with the events not suited to sites with high attendance rates as it caused congestion. Only 2 DYH workshops were delivered as a result.

Who the Program engaged looks at whether new audiences were being reached, and whether the program provided an equitable service to those in regional areas. Targets were set to engage 45 organisations that were funded by SV and 15 who were unfunded¹³. The measurement of this target was made difficult by the Program not consistently recording which, if any, organisation an individual represented. Whilst, in hindsight, the accuracy of this data collection represents an area of improvement for the program, and a lesson learnt, the Program was still able to validate at least 192 attendees represented organisations currently funded by SV and 324 have no current connection. The high level of engagement was a key success of the Program, demonstrating the appetite within the community for capability outreach. The visibility and uptake of the Program, especially amongst unfunded organisations, strongly contributes to SV's 3-year strategic outcome of enabling communities to take part in circular behaviours.

When assessing whether the Program managed to reach organisations in regional areas, the Program set a target of having 30% of those engaging with events being from a regional area. For simplicity's sake, as individuals were not polled on their exact location, the ratio of attendees at regional workshops to metro workshops was used to answer this question. Turnout at regional

¹³ Previously funded organisations may be counted as being unfunded if they do not currently have an active grant application but are still highly engaged with SV. This is a noted limitation of the indicator's definition.

workshops accounted for 33% of total attendance at the Program's in-person masterclasses.¹⁴ This meant that the Program exceeded its target for regional attendance.

Finally, the ultimate question: Did the Program build capability?

Masterclass participants overwhelmingly agreed.

With a target of 50% of attendees reporting improved capability, polling indicated that across the masterclasses, an average of 96.1% of participants felt the session had improved their capabilities. This sentiment was consistent across all polled events. As noted in the quantitative outcomes table, there was no question directly asking respondents if they improved their capability. Instead, this outcome was determined through affirmative responses to questions about improved confidence in applying learnings or having learnt something new during the workshop.

Survey respondents represented 46% of total workshop attendees. This robust response rate allowed the survey results to be considered reflective of the majority opinion.

¹⁴ The Program's online masterclass on 29th May 2024, Nunawading-based masterclass on 10th May 2024, and Melbourne-based masterclass on 7th June 2024 were excluded from this calculation.

Evaluation questions

The following qualitative questions were based on the Program's evaluation plan and program logic. Evaluation employed a traffic light system (left) to rate the degree of achievement towards the stated objectives as well as providing detailed context to answer the questions posed.



Figure 12. Summary of events and participation.



Did workshops increase capability in attending individuals?

- The workshops reached 533 individuals. Of these, 443 attended in-person and 90 at the online forum. The feedback survey was completed by 247 attendees. Of those, some did not receive a survey that asked a question that would indicate whether the individual increased their capability as a result of the workshop (N=15). Across the 21 workshops which asked a relevant question, 96% of participants reported increased capability from attending the workshop. Increased capability was counted as an increase, or high confidence, in applying workshop learnings or having learnt something new from attending. With a sample of 232 responses, this was a robust positive result that indicated the workshops were successful in building capability.

Did workshop attendance capture a variety of demographics?

- Among the 443 in-person attendees, 148 (33%) participated in a regional workshop, indicating strong representation from regional areas. The online workshop saw the highest attendance, with 90 participants, providing access for those unable to commute to an in-person session. Though the attendance records and feedback surveys did not ask targeted questions about demographics, it was determined that a broad range of community organisations were represented, some of whom were not currently engaged with SV, potentially fostering a new connection. Given the high survey uptake (46%) of this cohort, future workshops would benefit from asking a couple of demographic questions to learn more about their audience and whether the Program is reaching organisations that represent demographics such as refugees, CALD communities, ATSI groups and people with disabilities.

Were CALD/ATSI groups represented?

- The Program worked with some organisations that either serviced CALD/refugee communities or that had volunteers from the CALD or refugee communities, however, did not engage with any dedicated groups. Energy Victoria had a large engagement piece with ATSI

communities to assist with energy transition hence there was no demand for COCP to engage with First Nations organisations. The Program also did not have sufficient resources to offer tailored engagement for First Nations groups.

Many neighbourhood houses that engaged with the program were focussed on educating CALD and refugee individuals in effective recycling, and other sustainability skills. Further engagement with these groups to gain further insights in working with CALD populations would be a future opportunity for SV, as the COCP has merely scratched the surface.

Has the program increased the capability of participating community groups to change the mindset around circular economy or clean energy?

- 79% of survey participants in the Circular Economy workshops felt more confident in applying CE principles following the session. Beyond individual capability to engage with CE, there needs to be an ideological shift in the community towards embracing clean energy and CE principles. Through applying behaviour change principles, community organisations can work to change community attitudes towards these sustainable practices.

To what extent did the program enable networking opportunities across participants involved in the program?

- Networking was a central focus of workshops and forums alike, with participants encouraged to form new connections based on shared sustainability goals. Some workshops asked participants if they felt they had sufficient time to network with their peers during the workshops (N=181), 87% of respondents agreed.

Regional workshops recognised that geography can be limiting in forming connections and progressing sustainability programs. Hence, a modified survey included questions relating to a potential regional network of capability building.

Of regional attendees, 67% of those surveyed were interested in joining a regional capability network. Survey respondents who would like to join a network expressed they would like a regional network to provide more education and knowledge-sharing opportunities, allowing them to understand how others are driving change and eliciting innovative ideas.

Within the in-person regional workshops, there was a substantial difference in the amount learnt from the training session between respondents willing to join a regional network, compared to those who declined or were unsure. Those interested in a network reported their learnings as 85 out of a possible 100 points, compared to others at 76. This suggests that satisfaction with the quality of learning had a noticeable bearing on participants' willingness to further engage in future activities.

Were the interviews, survey data and event feedback used by SV beyond the program? How were they used ie. 3-year plan, SV2030?

- A key limitation of the extended COCP timeline is that constant data collection and organisation of events has prevented the program team from disseminating findings to the broader organisation to date. This may be possible if resourcing allows following program closure. This should be a priority as the information collected through the feedback processes bears high relevance to how SV should approach supporting future community projects. The Capability Kit also needs to be visible and widely utilised to further ensure that this aspect of Program represents good value for money and has a lasting impact.

Have capability needs been clearly defined across the sector, as a result of interviews, targeted online survey, forums and workshops? Are these in a form that can be easily communicated to relevant stakeholders?

- Yes – A capability need in this context are the goals of the organisation (ie. Recycling plastic bottle caps), the problems preventing them from achieving this and the skills or capabilities required to achieve that. Defining capabilities is typically achieved through analysing successful organisation with these capability needs. The Program has achieved this through engaging established community organisations through the special interest forums and interviewing them on their experience working in their area. From these forums, tailored capability statements were produced for each of the specialist streams. These statements outline a systematic plan for establishing and sustaining an organisation specialised in recovering items from this stream. These plans include activities such as recruiting and training volunteers, developing internal expertise, and effectively managing stakeholders and contracts. The Capability Kit will be the conduit to communicate capability needs to a general audience which will be made accessible on the SV website.

Did the program produce a Capability Kit or other resources for organisations to access?

- The Capability Kit is on track for completion, currently in its final draft phase. It is expected to be published in July or August 2024.

Did the program demonstrate high uptake and engagement from SV funded organisations?

Did the program engage organisations that were not involved with SV?¹⁵

- Attending workshops and contributing to forums were both highly popular with community organisations. Of attendees who disclosed their affiliation, 192 were representing organisations currently funded by SV, and 324 were not funded. Feedback from attendees strongly indicated a desire to engage with future program offerings or other initiatives from SV. This enthusiasm reflects the quality of program content and meaningful connections attendees gained through participating. The visibility of the Program among unfunded organisations especially contributes to establishing SV as a community leader in CE and sustainability education, one of the key objectives of SV's 3-year strategy.

Did the program uncover new topics and potential capability building projects that SV could pursue?

- Gathering data for the Capability Kit highlighted various pain points for organisations across different capability streams, ranging from specific issues to more general ones. These barriers signify potential areas for SV to focus on in future projects. Pursuing these as projects will first require effectively communicating the findings from forums and ensuring information is easily accessible.

Have any community of practices been formed or supported as a result of the program?

- The COCP facilitated the formation of a Community of Practice for each of the material stream forums that contributed to the development of the Capability Kit. Whether these groups will continue to meet in either a formal or informal capacity in the future is unclear. Regional workshop attendees were surveyed on their interest in a regional network, of which 68% expressed interest in joining. This would need to be initiated and maintained by SV in the future, and represents a promising opportunity given the degree of interest from community members.

Has the program contributed insights into how SV works with CALD and First Nations organisations?

- The Program was not sufficiently resourced to engage with First Nations organisations. Whilst some organisations involved CALD community members, the Program did not have dedicated engagement strategy to ensure that these groups were included. Whilst this represents a

¹⁵ "Not involved with SV" was defined as not currently receiving grant funding from SV. Some organisations may have historically engaged with SV in some capacity.

missed opportunity, on balance it was decidedly unrealistic for the Program to seek out engagement with diverse organisations with the limited budget and resources.

Has there been measurable improvement in the capability of community organisations to deliver sustainability outcomes in the community (either starting up projects or scaling up existing projects)?

 This question requires a depth of understanding about the participating community organisations and their ongoing operation that cannot be derived from the point-in-time feedback sought following capability building workshops. The measurable impacts in capability would come with time, and the unit of measurement would be subjective and vary by organisation function. Some measures could include an increase in volunteers, ability to accept a new type of material for recycling, or better community engagement.

Collecting this data would require ongoing collaboration with organisations to effectively demonstrate an improvement in a capability domain. Whilst the Program undoubtedly built confidence and skills in the individual (96% of workshop attendees), observing organisational-level improvements is outside the scope of the current evaluation. This could be re-visited if designing any follow-up surveys or interviews with workshop participants.

Has the program contributed to positioning the community sector to scale up its role in driving community ambition, engagement, and projects across Victoria?

 Yes – the Program has made substantial contributions to building capabilities within the community sector. Through designing the Program in consultation with community and relevant stakeholders, the Program content was highly relevant to the needs of community. This, along with being highly engaging, led to the Program being well-received by participants, with an overwhelming majority finding the sessions valuable and relevant to them and their organisation. The Program had an extensive reach, accommodating 533 participants in the workshops alone. Furthermore, its impact extends beyond the workshops, with the potential for the learnings to be disseminated at the organisational level.

Program limitations

The COCP would be best evaluated with a more longitudinal focus, ie. evaluation occurring 6 to 12 months after the Program has concluded its delivery of workshops and published its Capability Kit. This is due to the current tight timeframes making it difficult to measure the long term change that is being sought from the Program's offerings. Ideally, community organisations would get time to consolidate and apply the knowledge gained from workshops, and through accessing the Capability Kit before the effectiveness of the Program is assessed. As this is not tenable on current timelines, it is assumed that increased capability reported following workshop attendance will translate into tangible improvements in the community organisation's operations in the near future. The extended timelines further mean there has not been sufficient time since collection of feedback (ongoing until the end of May 2024) to apply learnings.

Evaluating long term impact

With the likelihood of staffing resources being available to monitor the COCP's extended impact until the end of 2024, the following measures could be used to demonstrate the program's ongoing effectiveness.

Given the tight timeframes to wrap up the Program and evaluation, it would be worthwhile re-visiting some of the general questions posed in the evaluation plan that would benefit from a longitudinal focus:

- Has there been measurable improvement in the capability of community organisations to deliver sustainability outcomes in the community (either starting up projects or scaling up existing projects)?
- Has the program contributed to positioning the community sector to scale up its role in driving community ambition, engagement, and projects across Victoria?

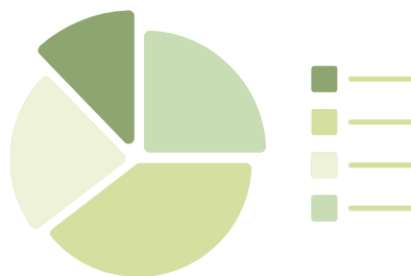
Answering these questions can be enhanced by reviewing the specific outcomes and feedback gathered from the Capability Kit and by following up with workshop participants who consented to further contact, as detailed below.

Capability Kit

Potential measures of impact could include:

Quantitative: Clickthrough rate, a feedback form rating satisfaction with Kit following access.

Qualitative: A free text feedback form following access of the Kit with prompts OR a place to register email for follow up in a few months once individual has time to access the information in full and potentially apply it in their context.



Workshops

Follow up survey with workshop participants who consented to future contact. Potential questions could include:

- How do you rate your current capability in operating a sustainability project?
 - Has your capability increased or decreased since the workshop?
 - Have you shared or applied your learnings within your organisation?
 - If yes, what actions have you taken?
 - If no, what were the barriers?
 - Have you formed or maintained any contacts or networks from the event?



Efficiency

When assessing the Program's efficiency, we consider whether it delivers good value for money for community organisations through effective budget and resource management. We also examine the potential long-term benefits of the Program in terms of improving efficiency within organisations operations and future grant programs through improved capabilities. Furthermore, we revisit and analyse whether the assumptions stipulated in the Program's planning phase were met and how this impacted program delivery.

Timeline

The Program's timeline underwent an extension, stretching from its original plan for completion within the 2023 calendar year to mid-2024. This extension became possible due to the resource availability within the Community Solutions team. This development has several positive impacts on the Program's efficiency, as the extension allows more workshops to be delivered and further refinement of resources before they are released.

This change has allowed the program to expand its reach by delivering workshops in regional areas, promoting equity, and reaching a broader audience of people and organisations. The longer delivery period has also facilitated iterative improvements and adaptations based on workshop feedback. This ongoing iterative process enables the program to become increasingly tailored to meet the specific needs of its target audience, thereby enhancing its effectiveness, and increasing participant satisfaction. Conducting more workshops over an extended timeline can foster deeper partnerships with organisations involved in the program. This collaboration can result in heightened support, shared resources, and a wider network to build capability in the community.

However, the extended timeline comes with a trade-off. The delivery of ongoing workshops alongside the evaluation process has presented challenges regarding the effectiveness of data collection. The concurrent nature of these activities has impeded the evaluation process. This may ultimately impact the ability to capture and disseminate the Program's learnings and benefits, affecting the long-term case for Program renewal. Furthermore, with the Capability Kit not yet published, a key deliverable is left out of the evaluation equation. The evaluation team have made every effort to mitigate the effects of a tight delivery timeline but, as noted, a longitudinal evaluation approach would provide more comprehensive insights into the program's effectiveness. This would involve following up with organisations several months after workshop delivery, allowing them time to fully utilise the program's resources.

Resources and reach

One of the program's standout strengths lies in its ability to foster relationships and networks within community organisations. By tapping into existing networks and relationships, the program achieves significant impact without the need for excessive resource allocation. This strategic approach capitalises on a somewhat unique aspect of community organisations – their collaborative nature -- allowing the program to leverage these connections efficiently.

The program's focus on reaching a broad audience rather than offering a diverse range of workshops is noteworthy. By concentrating on behaviour change workshops—a key area of interest for many community organisations—the program optimises its time and effort. This targeted approach ensured that the workshops resonated with a wide range of organisations in Victoria, aligning with the Program's main objectives of maximising engagement and reach.

The development of the Capability Kit further exemplifies efficient resource utilisation. By equipping organisations with essential resources for sustainability projects, the Kit reduces their time investment

and barriers to success. Standardised materials and processes streamline operations, will benefit both SV and participating organisations in terms of time and resource savings.

Additionally, the program's emphasis on building organisational capabilities extends to grant application processes. By empowering organisations to identify and apply for relevant grants, the program reduces wasted time on unsuitable opportunities. This capability-building not only eases the grant application process for organisations but also contributes to overall efficiency within the broader grant application landscape, a significant offering of SV. The positive impacts of this capability-building initiative are likely to extend to future grant rounds run by SV, enhancing efficiency and success rates in grant acquisition.

Program assumptions

The degree of success of the COCP was contingent on several assumptions proposed during the Program's formulation. Following program delivery, the extent to which these assumptions were correct and their impact on the Program's efficiency can be assessed.

Table 5. Assumptions from COCP design and assessment of their impact on program efficiency.

Assumption		Assessment
Community organisations possess a clear understanding of their capabilities and limitations, enabling them to discern what they can realistically achieve.		Correct. The Program Lead expressed that community groups coming together through the program helped them collaborate in problem solving and recognise their limitations, with the Program providing tools and resources to overcome these barriers. Whilst this understanding may or may not have initially been present for many organisations, the process of engaging with the program quickly built this comprehension.
SV possesses sufficient ongoing resources to enable this program to continue.		Correct. With resource reallocations, SV were even able to extend the program beyond its initial timeline, enabling additional outputs. This was likely aided by the Program staying within budget.
Peak bodies can play a supportive role in distributing surveys to ensure an adequate number of responses are obtained, with a target response rate of 30%.		Somewhat. This assumption held true for neighbourhood houses and Men's Sheds, but not for religious and cultural groups. The data compiled (Appendix C.) was sufficient for the Program to make educated decisions in designing new, and adapting existing, program content.
Volunteers have the necessary time and willingness to participate in program activities.		Correct. Given the Program met all engagement outcome targets, volunteers were highly motivated to learn from the Program's offerings.
Community organisations with the requisite capability and capacity are willing to share their knowledge with SV and other stakeholders.		Correct. Established community organisations demonstrated a high degree of engagement within capability forums. All capability streams were well represented and included a diverse range of stakeholders.

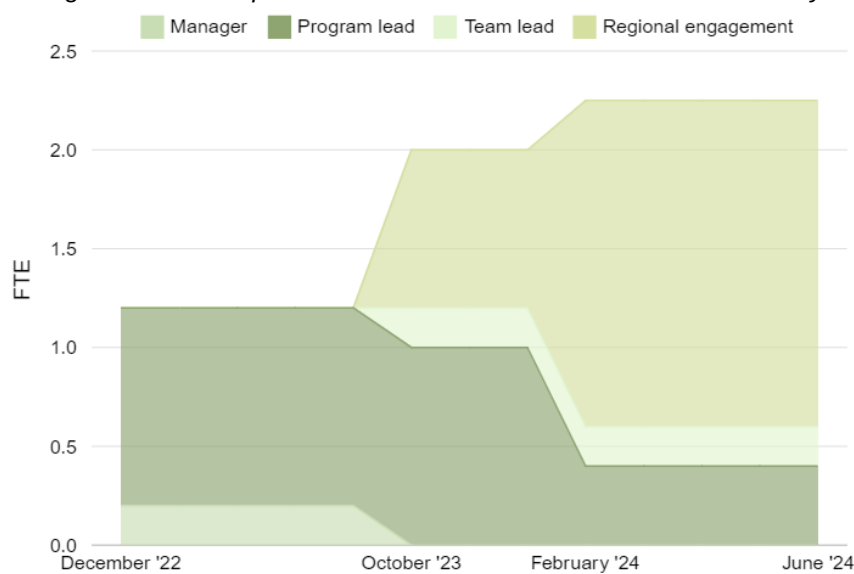
Budget

Operating on a very modest budget of \$157,000, the Program not only met but exceeded its goals for the number of workshops delivered, showcasing exceptional budget efficiency. However, it's

important to note that this budget did not encompass staff resourcing costs, which are significant when assessing overall resources allocated versus outputs.

The COCP had one dedicated program lead, and occasional support from other Community Solutions colleagues. Teasing out the total FTE dedicated to the Program puts total staffing resource expenditure at an estimated \$303,998¹⁶, with an average of 1.47 FTE working on the core COCP offerings (Figure 13). Apart from the core program lead and supporting team leader, regional engagement leads, who coordinated 13 workshops in mid-2024 comprised a substantial proportion of this FTE.

Figure 13. FTE equivalent dedicated to the COCP over its delivery.



Interviews with those involved in the Program reflected that staffing levels were sufficient, despite Program scope being larger than initially anticipated. Staffing expenditure necessitates re-evaluating the resources and effort required to run the Program. When staffing costs are accounted for, the Program cost approximately \$460,000 to deliver over the 18-month period. Hence, efficiency considers the actual program cost rather than the allocated budget. It was determined that the staffing resources allocated were essential for delivering the volume of events, and the program benefited from flexibility in staffing, adding more staff members to assist with workshops once the program was fully established. Even when considering the full program cost, the program's efficient use of funds is evident from the number of events delivered and the suitability of the content for the community members it reached.

The ability to surpass workshop delivery targets within such limited program cost speaks to the program's effective resource utilisation. This achievement required strategic planning, streamlined operations, and efficient allocation of funds towards activities that directly contribute to the program's success. The Program also demonstrated remarkable effectiveness and appropriateness for achieving its intended objectives within the constraints of budget and staffing. This was attributed to the thorough planning phase and the Program's ability to respond to the needs of its target audience.

Beyond the contributions of the Program lead, the Program also benefitted from the wealth of experience and support within SV's Community Solutions team provide key insights in designing the program and assisting with program delivery when needed. Conversations with team members evidenced that the efficiency of the Program can partially be attributed to this framework of support and time investment from the team.

¹⁶ Assuming base rates using VPS salaries effective 1 March 2023.

Lessons learnt

A lessons learnt session was held during the evaluation period with an invitation extended to all SV staff members involved in the program's design and delivery. This session was followed by one-on-one interviews with key program members to further expand on lessons learnt.

The dot points below are the verbatim responses made by the program team during this lessons learnt session.

Summary themes

- SV staff gained a better understanding of capability, community contributions, and stakeholder needs through dedicated efforts and a collaborative Capability Kit development process.
- The program filled a substantial gap and was designed with the community's needs in mind.
- The program fostered strong connections between community organisations, bringing together like-minded individuals in communities of practice after a period of COVID isolation.
- Clearer goals, outcomes and data collection methods would have enhanced the reporting and better characterised program impact.



What we have achieved

Capacity building and capability development

- Better understanding of what capability is and how it relates to the work SV does
- Dedicated staff member over 18 months with good knowledge of the program and community members
- Capability Kit developed with contributions by many participants
- Increased focus on and understanding of the contribution of community groups for staff within SV
- Greater understanding of what stakeholders need, and the support expected from SV

Community engagement and collaboration

- Public presence of SV at various community forums
- SV had direct connections with community members
- Building understanding of circular economy with community organisations, shifting behaviours, and improving operations
- Encouraging collaboration and learning across community groups where they may not have otherwise met
- Seeding place-based networks of community change makers
- Engagement with CECF recipients and relationships developed.

Positive impact and support

- Feedback from the workshops SV ran was very positive.
- Trialled SV's behaviour change workshop with real people and added to their capability
- Great to have that link with the community, many commented that SV was filling a gap
- Helped support community members isolated due to the pandemic
- Partnerships with local government for behaviour change workshops
- Reaching out to new stakeholder audiences in regional areas

Knowledge gathering and sharing

- Gathered base of knowledge of different community group attitudes towards sustainability (CCCEA survey)
- Strong and niche communities of practice formed



What worked well

“Community groups have been so generous with their time, hardworking and dedicated – that should be acknowledged.”

– SV team member

Connection and collaboration

- Connection with CECF
- Connections with other SV groups
- Links into existing networks (repair cafes and bicycle groups had their own networks)
- Using stakeholder networks to reach new audiences.
- Program manager collaborated well across the SV teams

Community engagement and support

- Opportunity to talk to many stakeholders directly and in their own spaces.
- Giving community organisations and members purpose during and after COVID and a reason to connect
- A focus on listening to the community
- Support by regional engagement leads helped promote forums.
- Information sharing forums for specific areas of work (e.g., bike repair)

Capacity building and knowledge sharing

- Sharing of knowledge by stakeholders, forums allowed stakeholders to share and bounce ideas off each other.
- Support by SV lab in surveys and workshop content
- The capability building space had been neglected for a while, so having a program come in and revive it was a positive
- Tasking workshops to the regional engagement team

Empowering stakeholders and tailored support

- Having a dedicated staff member championing this area of work
- Potential to use contacts made during this program to promote the other work of SV.
- Program always asked community groups what they needed; SV didn't just go out there and dictate. Workshops were specifically designed around their requests and needs.
- Found out the pain points for community groups – areas that needed further work.

Visibility and outreach

- SV is seen to be out there – good to support the regional team and regional contacts with substance

- Program manager collaborated well across the SV teams.
- Using stakeholder networks to reach new audiences



What did not work well

Project planning and clarity

- Could have had clearer goals for the project at inception.
- Shifting time frames and ambitious scope
- Program design was contingent on each phase supporting the next
- Lack of visibility on participant data (needs, outcomes) and how they relate back to program objectives
- Having a limited time – these types of programs should be ongoing

Community engagement and co-design challenges

- Hoping for more co-design with the community but community had limited resources
- Change in personnel within community groups meant some strong advocates dropped out
- First nations engagement – needed a whole strategy and proved too complex to fit within scope
- Getting the capability kit done earlier in the program may have helped continue engagement and further the learning
- It would've been great if SV could've run all the behaviour change workshops – but we didn't have the resourcing

Resource management and internal alignment

- Resources – mainly one person in lead with some support from other programs
- Competing visions within SV for program potential
- The Program created a demand on already under-resourced community organisations.
- People within organisations that build up capability from grant funding often move on when the grant ends, meaning it is hard to keep skills in-house long term for organisations



What could be done differently next time

Strategic goal articulation and project scope

- Clearer articulation of goals from the onset
- Larger projects for more impactful outcomes
- Design of CECF grant application could have required reflection on baseline capability to get a measure of before/after
- Targeted to address systemic issues

Role dynamics and relationship building

- Different dynamics between grant manager (CECF) and capability lead relationship with stakeholders
- Originally the COCP lead and CECF lead were separate roles, now due to resourcing are integrated
- Capability lead needed to build confidence of stakeholders to understand challenges stakeholders were grappling with

- Having the same person in both roles could cause trust issues with stakeholders
- Longer timeframe for staff resourcing to deepen relationships with the community and broaden the impact of the program

Data and evaluation

- Data would be helpful – what are the objectives of capability building and what change have participants reports
- Set out more resources as to what SV had already completed in regard to capability
- Building the capability building program to align with SV grants

Program management and approach refinement

- Less time pressure for the program manager
- Focus on avoidance, minimisation using an education and/or behaviour change approach
- SV to establish what is good/best practice approach/model for guidance
- Stronger innovation lens

Conclusion

The COCP was a high-impact program for community organisations. Operating on a modest budget, the program effectively delivered numerous educational workshops, forums, and a comprehensive Capability Kit, enhancing the capabilities of participating organisations.

The Program's face-to-face and online masterclasses were highly regarded by attendees who found the sessions engaging and educative. There is room for improvement in inclusivity strategies, particularly in engaging CALD and First Nations groups. Despite this, the program achieved substantial equity and reach through a suite of workshops in regional areas.

The extension of the program timeline allowed for additional masterclasses and improved resource delivery, but the full impact of the program remains to be seen. The Capability Kit, a key deliverable, needs promotion and feedback to gauge its effectiveness fully.

The Program is a timely initiative with the announcement of SV's 3-year strategy, as it prepares the community to engaged in circular economy initiatives through providing them with resources, education sessions and networking opportunities.

Future initiatives should include a dedicated engagement plan for underrepresented groups and evaluation of the Capability Kit to ensure lasting impact and relevance. The COCP has laid a strong foundation, and with continued effort, it can drive significant progress in community-led sustainability initiatives.

Appendix A. Summary of events hosted by COCP.

	Event	Date	Attendance	Type
1.	SESSION 1 - It's all about the experience	30/05/2023	24	Workshop
2.	SESSION 2 - Setting Up for Success	8/07/2023	30	Workshop
3.	SESSION 3 - Surviving and Thriving	13/07/2023	28	Workshop
4.	DYH Event – Ballarat	29/08/2023	7	Workshop
5.	Repair Café Forum	19/09/2023	17	Forum
6.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability	10/10/2023	30	Workshop
7.	Circular economy 101 – Getting started with circularity	12/10/2023	14	Workshop
8.	Circular economy 101 – Getting started with circularity	17/10/2023	29	Workshop
9.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability	19/10/2023	54	Workshop
10.	Bicycle Recyclers Forum	31/10/2023	18	Forum
11.	Repair Café Forum	21/11/2023	12	Forum
12.	DYH Event – Swan Hill	30/01/2024	9	Workshop
13.	Food Waste Recovery Forum	31/01/2024	9	Forum
14.	Food Waste Compost Forum	02/02/2024	7	Forum
15.	Special Waste Forum	06/02/2024	7	Forum
16.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability	24/02/2024	19	Workshop
17.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Maryborough	22/03/2024	12	Workshop
18.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Sale	17/04/2024	13	Workshop
19.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Drouin	18/04/2024	20	Workshop
20.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Geelong	23/04/2024	23	Workshop
21.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Wodonga	01/05/2024	9	Workshop
22.	Hard & textiles waste – Community of Practice	01/05/2024	4	Forum
23.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Shepparton	02/05/2024	10	Workshop
24.	Compost organics – Community of Practice	03/05/2024	6	Forum
25.	Special waste – Community of Practice	06/05/2024	5	Forum

26.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Swan Hill	07/05/2024	15	Workshop
27.	Bicycle repairs – Community of Practice	07/05/2024	12	Forum
28.	Repair cafe – Community of Practice	08/05/2024	6	Forum
29.	Food recovery – Community of Practice	09/05/2024	4	Forum
30.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Whitehorse	10/05/2024	28	Workshop
31.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Horsham	13/05/2024	13	Workshop
32.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Ballarat	14/05/2024	15	Workshop
33.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Warrnambool	22/05/2024	18	Workshop
34.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Online	29/05/2024	90	Workshop
35.	Harnessing behavioural insights for sustainability – Melbourne	07/06/2024	23	Workshop

Appendix B. COCP representation at external events.

Date	Host	Location	Target Audience	Involvement
24/05/23	DECCA - EVAG (Northern)	Multipurpose room at The Dock	Volunteer group managers	Conference participant
29/06/23	SV - CEBIC	SV Level 12 (Town Hall)	SV stakeholders - Council, CEBIC and CECL	Networking Event (table lead)
28/06/23	Co Health (Melton)	Djerriwarra Health - Melton	Community Service Providers - Melton area	Panel speaker (10 min presentation on SV)
28/07/23	DECCA - EVM Grow	SV Level 12 (Town Hall)	Volunteer group Managers	Conference participant
04/08/23	Victorian Greenhouse Alliance	Conference Centre Docklands	Council/State Government	Conference participant / helped stall
11/08/23	Australian Repair Network	Online	Repair Cafes	Conference participant
23/08/23	Big Shedders Breakfast	Dromana Men's Shed	Community groups - Men's sheds	Hosted a Stall
02/09/23	Zero Waste Festival	Federation Square	General public/ Community groups at stalls	Hosted a Stall and a Panel discussion as Event Partner
06/09/23	DECCA - EVM Network in the North	Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre (PRACC) South Morang	Volunteer group Managers	Conference participant
12/11/23	Garage Sale Trail - Reloved festival	Boyd Centre - City Rd	General Public/Community groups at stalls	Hosted a Stall
17/03/24	Bendigo Sustainability Festival	Bendigo	General Public/Community groups at stalls	Ran a Stall
06/03/24	C4CE (congress for Clean Energy)	SV Level 12 (Town Hall)	General Public/Community groups at stalls	Hosted congress
06/03/24	C4CE (congress for Clean Energy)	Gippsland	General Public/Community groups at stalls	Hosted congress
06/03/24	C4CE (congress for Clean Energy)	Geelong	General Public/Community groups at stalls	Hosted congress
06/03/24	C4CE (congress for Clean Energy)	Ballarat	General Public/Community groups at stalls	Hosted congress
26/03/24	Thinking outside of the box:	Online (hosted by Sustain Australia)	General public - online panel	Panel speaker

	reducing packaging waste			
22/03/24	Opening of Creative Common Space	Melbourne Polytechnic in Greensbrough	General public	Attend as invited guest
27/04/24	Scouts Vic - Survival Camp	Mafeking Rover Park, Seymour	Community group	Ran sustainability activity (beeswax wraps)
02/05/24	Co Health (Melton)	Fraser Rise Community Centre	Community Service Providers - Melton area	Panel speaker (15 min presentation on SV)
05/06/24	Green Connect Open Day	Ashley St Braybrook	Government agencies and Green collect stakeholders	Presentation and warehouse tour

Appendix C. Community Action Surveys

Men's sheds (N=67)

The aim of this survey, conducted in June 2023, was to gauge Men's sheds interest in sustainability and to see if SV could assist with any capability building.

The Men's Shed is a volunteer-based, not-for-profit, grass-roots community movement which provides opportunities for all men to become involved in various activities in a collegial and supportive environment (Australian Men's Shed Association, 2013).

This survey aimed to provide high level summary feedback to Men's Sheds with the intention of producing a publication. This did not eventuate. However, there are plans to adapt the learnings for information for SV.

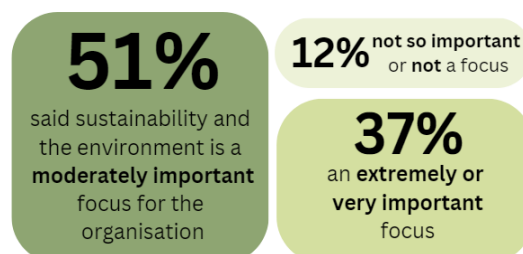


Figure 14. Geographical distribution of survey responses (N=66).

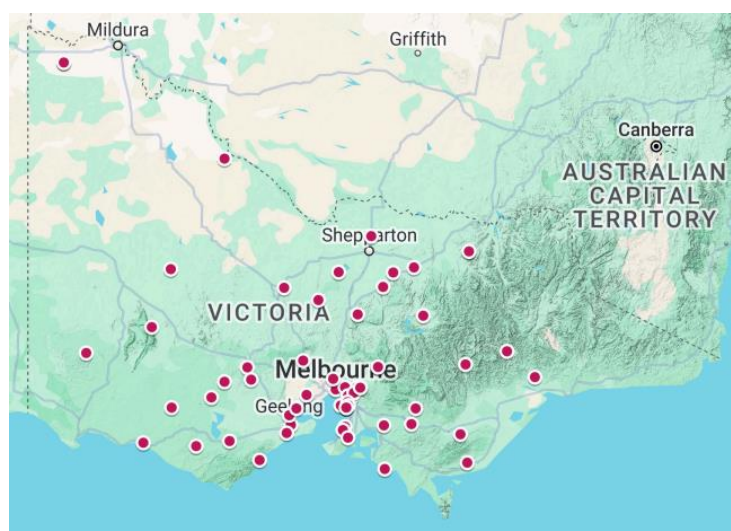
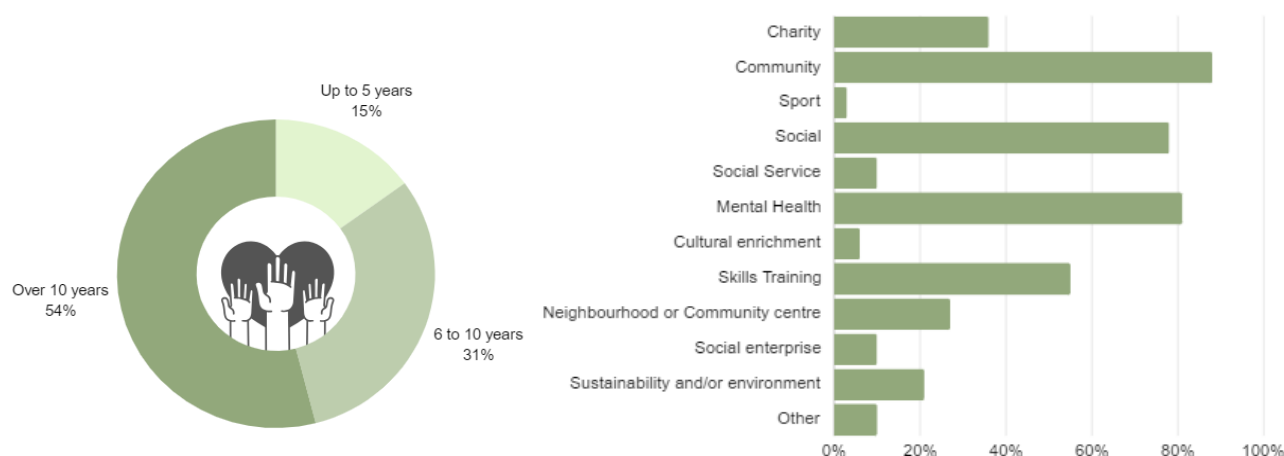


Figure 15 (Left). Responding Men's Sheds: Time in operation

Figure 16 (Right). Key functions of the Men's Sheds (multiple selections allowed)



Neighbourhood houses (N=394)

The aim of this survey was to gauge neighbourhood houses interest in sustainability and to see if SV could assist with any capability building. The Neighbourhood Houses survey 2022 includes the responses of 394 (98%) of the 401 Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funded Victorian Neighbourhood Houses.

Table 6. Number and distribution of community development projects

Project aims	Average	Total	Count	% of total activity (N=4,333 projects)
Strengthen the capacity of a community to advocate for its needs e.g., training in lobbying, use of media, establish an advocacy group etc.	2.2	242	109	5.6%
Protect or improve the local environment e.g., tree planting, clean ups, advocacy to protect an environmental asset, sustainable energy project etc.	2.5	366	148	8.4%
Increase community self-reliance e.g., grow your own food project, energy reduction project, community fundraising activity etc.	5.6	497	88	11.5%

Table 7. Comparison of percentage of sessions by program type: 2022 to 2017

Program type	2022	2017
Environmental sustainability projects/groups	1.8%	1.4%

Table 8. Percentage of NHs providing services by type.

Service type	Percent
Food relief	70%
Gardening groups/clubs/activities	68%
Waste reduction/recycling	38%
Food security – long term	19%

Neighbourhood Houses were also actively participating in connecting people with the State Government's Power Saving Bonus with 19,770 applications through Neighbourhood Houses worth almost \$5 million in 2022.

Neighbourhood Houses assisted 19,770 Victorians who wanted or needed assistance to claim the State Government's Power Saving Bonus. The value to recipients was \$4,942,500 for 2022.