

# DRIVING SOCIAL INNOVATION IN PLACE AND COMMUNITY

*2025 City North Activation Program*

CIRCULAR CITIES SHOWCASE

# Circular Cities Showcase

Project Leads: Caitlin Phillips-Peddlesden and Dr Akvan Gajanayake

## Project Summary

The *Circular Cities Showcase* brought together city-makers, industry, researchers and communities to accelerate Melbourne's transition to a circular economy.

Hosted at the RMIT Activator in the heart of the City North Social Innovation Precinct, the Showcase served as a place-based platform for innovation, purpose and collaboration. Across two days, it brought together research, ventures and demonstrations that reshaped how urban environments are planned, built and experienced.

The event brought the vision of the Project to light through showcasing tangible, market-ready solutions and prototypes, and demonstrating how circular principles can move from concept to application. In this context the City North Precinct was highlighted as a scalable example of a micro-circular economy in action, driving circular transitions in an urban environment — where circular ideas can be tested, demonstrated, and refined.

The Showcase also strengthened collaboration and cross-sector partnerships between industry, government and academia; an essential foundation for advancing circular transformation. By convening leaders from across sectors, the Showcase created a platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange, with panellists sharing actionable insights and highlighting pathways from research into practice, setting the tone for ongoing collaborative engagement.

The Showcase Industry Workshop component offered hands-on engagement, bringing together stakeholders to co-design solutions based on future scenarios, and share knowledge across disciplines. Discussions in this workshop focused on circular best practice including pre-fabrication, digital tools, material stewardship, and design for flexibility and disassembly.

## Key Project Activities, Milestones & Deliverables

The Showcase took place in November 2025 and contained 16 exhibits. The Circular Cities Launch Event took place on the first day, followed by an Industry Workshop the following day.



*"The Circular Cities Showcase highlighted the City North Social Innovation Precinct as a scalable exemplar of micro-circular economy in action."*

*Project Leads, Circular Cities Showcase Project*





*"So many voices in one room, all passionate about circularity and moving towards a more sustainable world. In the next 5 - 10 years I think there will be so much innovation."*

*Circular Cities Showcase Participant*



There were 137 registered for the Project, with 89 people registering for the Launch Event and 42 for the Workshop. Estimates suggest approximately 90 – 100 people came to the Showcase, with 79 attending the Launch Event and Workshop.

All attendees had the opportunity to view the 16 Showcase exhibits displayed in the RMIT Activator space. There was a large volume of exhibit applications with over 20 provided by the RMIT research community, the RMIT Activator program and alumni network. Other applications were received from external applicants generated through industry partner outreach.

### Project Impact

Overall, the Project generated positive outcomes for exhibitors, attendees, and collaborative partners. Informal verbal feedback from Showcase exhibitors indicated many appreciated the opportunity to present their work within the circular economy sector and build their network by connecting with stakeholders and potential customers. Some also expressed that the opportunity to network with other exhibitors was extremely valuable as it created understanding of interconnected circular solutions.

Additionally, Showcase staff received verbal feedback from several Launch Event attendees communicating that they found the Panel discussion to be engaging and informative. Further key connections were able to be made by RMIT Activator under the Circular Cities framing, which can support future business development and partnership activities.

Crucially, the Project facilitated discussions concerning potential collaborations between innovators and RMIT academics on new research projects.

### Future Planning

The Project model holds promise for future research and innovation showcases around different sectors, such as hospitality, retail, and textiles. Fortunately, RMIT has strong expertise and capability in these areas, and a wealth of government and industry partners to support collaboration and delivery.

The Showcase team have followed up the event with a short engagement survey administered to all registrants. The survey aims to understand stakeholder interest in future circular research and innovation activities and invites respondents to indicate any other relevant stakeholders that could be interested in the work of Circular Cities.

Further engagements will be undertaken in 2026 and RMIT Activator intends to hold other innovation showcases linked to programs operating in 2026.

Click the icons below to read reflections from our showcase participants



The City North Project  
is really about those small  
changes leading to big impacts  
– bit by bit we can make  
change and make that  
change valuable.

The *Circular Cities Showcase* team acknowledge and thank the following contributors:

**Circular Cities Showcase**

Hip V. Hype, Evitat, City of Melbourne, Claire-Louise Salles.

For more information on the City North Social Innovation Precinct,  
including partnership, collaboration and co-location opportunities, visit:

