



Circular Economy Towns & Villages

Regenerating & Rebuilding Resilience in
Rural New South Wales

PROJECT PROPOSAL

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PolisPlan is a strategic town planning and engineering consultancy that seeks to collaborate with Councils in regional Australia to regenerate rural towns and villages and maximise their economic, social and environmental resilience. This report includes our recommended strategic town planning policy framework that will provide certainty for investors to build the necessary infrastructure and create the ongoing opportunities that will attract future residents.

Our approach is to utilise the best of modern technology for the construction and management of energy and water micro-grids to supply electricity and water to townships and also to manage surrounding landscape ecosystems. These managed landscapes, with improved soil health for retaining water and sustaining biological diversity, will also support a comprehensive regenerative agricultural system to provide food for the local community. In addition, they will serve as an effective buffer against future bushfires, while also creating a local, water-charged micro-climate that should reduce the future likelihood of bushfires in the area.

To finance these works it will be necessary to provide affordable housing and work spaces for regenerative farmers, land and ecosystem managers, hospitality workers and others including visitors.

An overview of the Circular Economy Village development model is available at our website: BeautilityDevelopments.com.au, which provides the following brief description:

We are planning for a network of high-tech, regenerative villages that strive towards self-sufficiency and zero waste within their bioregion. Each village is to be designed for up to 200 people and will integrate affordable co-working and co-living spaces with water and energy micro-grids and a regenerative agricultural food system.

Whereas our model is described in terms of discrete project development units (villages or hubs) that support a population of 200 persons, this is done for financing and planning purposes only. The villages will be designed to fully integrate with existing communities, providing complementary infrastructure, assets and community spaces. The number and location of these development units will be determined in consultation with Council and the local community so as to efficiently enhance the livelihoods of existing as well as incoming communities.

Section 2 of this report introduces the proponents, and outlines the strategic relationships we are developing with infrastructure providers, community housing providers and academics.

Section 3 describes the form and structure of the development units and indicates how they will be connected with other towns and villages in the bioregion to form a network that will further increase the resilience of the community and the land.

Section 4 provides more detail about the development model by illustrating how it responds to some important public debates such as the need for **affordable housing**, **regenerative agriculture** and a **built environment that enhances public health**. This section also describes why the development model represents an important economic opportunity for rural communities by creating attractive locations for **e-changers**, that is, people who work online and are seeking to escape from the city. Furthermore, the development model also responds to important social and environmental issues. By planning for a discrete population and providing the basic needs of residents within the

development, it is possible to strive towards **one planet living**, while also creating **local resilience**. Designing places where residents can collaborate to provide their basic needs is a practical alternative to proposals for a **Universal Basic Income**. Also, by designing in systems and planning for life-cycles, it is possible to strive towards zero waste, supporting the **transition from a linear to a circular economy**.

Section 5 outlines how the proposed development model might be implemented through the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW) and the relevant state and local planning provisions. The implementation process includes a review of a range of strategies and policies as well as locality planning and community engagement. The proposed planning process would also require the preparation of a site masterplan together with a Voluntary Planning Agreement which may be made pursuant to Subdivision 2 of Division 7.1 of the EP&A Act 1979 (NSW).

PolisPlan would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how we might collaborate with Council to draft and implement the proposed town planning framework to enable the development of Circular Economy Villages. Such developments would enhance the economic, social and environmental resilience of rural towns and villages in regional Australia.

The establishment of such a policy framework would provide the certainty necessary to attract investors and future residents to ensure developments are delivered.

2. PROPONENTS

PolisPlan is a strategic town planning and engineering consultancy. The directors of PolisPlan, Steven Liaros and Nilmini De Silva, have decades of local government experience and are now applying that experience to create a new model for land development that is economically affordable and efficient, socially resilient as well as being environmentally sustainable. Steven and Nilmini also bring to this project their skills in town planning, water management, community consultation and project management. Their local government experience is in a variety of roles, including local infrastructure planning, preparation of development control plans, planning instrument amendments, natural systems management and working with multi-disciplinary teams to deliver complex projects.

Over the past six (6) years, the proponents have visited and studied numerous innovative development projects around Australia and in Europe, building on their decades of local government experience. Through this research they have designed the development model and also built relationships with a number of potential future partners. Initial conversations with a major registered Community Housing Provider have been promising and such a partnership will bring necessary development expertise and potentially also low-cost Federal Government financing. Recently the proponents joined the Open Cities Alliance (opencities.net.au), which includes technical experts and advocates for circular economy and precinct-based infrastructure.

The proposed development model is based on the principles of the Circular Economy—systems thinking, planning for life cycles and striving for zero waste. The model has also been refined through a PhD project by Steven Liaros at The University of Sydney's Department of Political Economy. The current thesis title is: 'A New Paradigm for Land Development: Creating Regenerative Nodes within a Distributed & Networked Global City'. The regenerative nodes refers to the 'Circular Economy Villages' described in this report.

3. CIRCULAR ECONOMY VILLAGES

3.1. DEVELOPMENT FORM & STRUCTURE

Each village or hub is proposed to be designed for no more than 200 people and will integrate working and living spaces with water and energy micro-grids and a local agricultural food system. The integration of regenerative agriculture with the built environment requires a fundamental re-imagining of town planning processes that have historically separated land uses and, in particular, separated urban from rural areas.

The ideal site would be a minimum of 40 hectares in area. This has been determined based on initial estimates of the land area required to feed 200 people. The population is an absolute maximum but site areas can be increased and populations decreased to ensure the population matches the carrying capacity of the chosen site. **Figure 1** provides a broad schematic illustration of the structure of development.

The five (5) hectare area identified for the compact built environment is equivalent to a low density suburban residential area required to house 200 people although with a pedestrian oriented development and more integrated community facilities. Smaller and more flexible housing will be more than compensate by immediate access to shared spaces and facilities, including co-working and entertainment spaces. Occupants will also have direct access to food, water and energy.

Whilst the three (3) precincts are shown to be clearly delineated, this is for the purposes of assessing permissibility of uses in different land use zones and for any registration of covenants on the land title. Some food growing will likely occur in all three precincts, while structures permissible in rural zones may be located in those areas.

Locating the site near an existing rural village or town would maximise the benefits for the local community by designing the proposed village to provide complementary facilities and assets to those offered in the nearby locality.

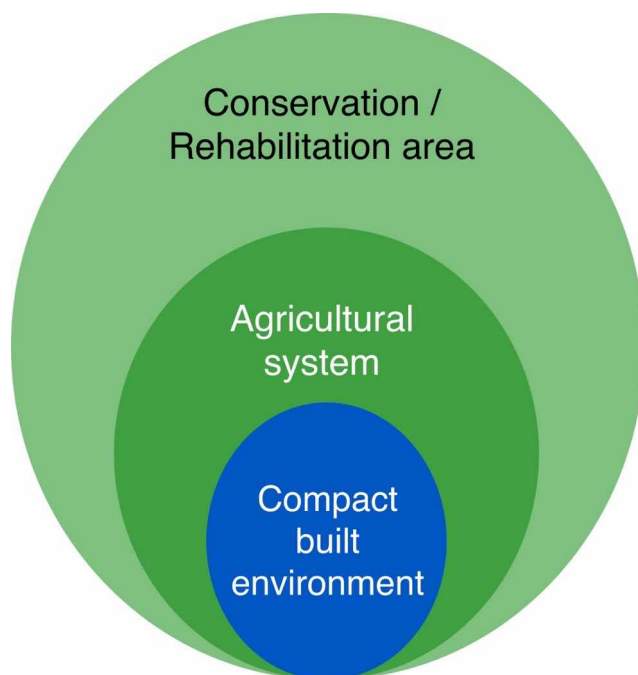


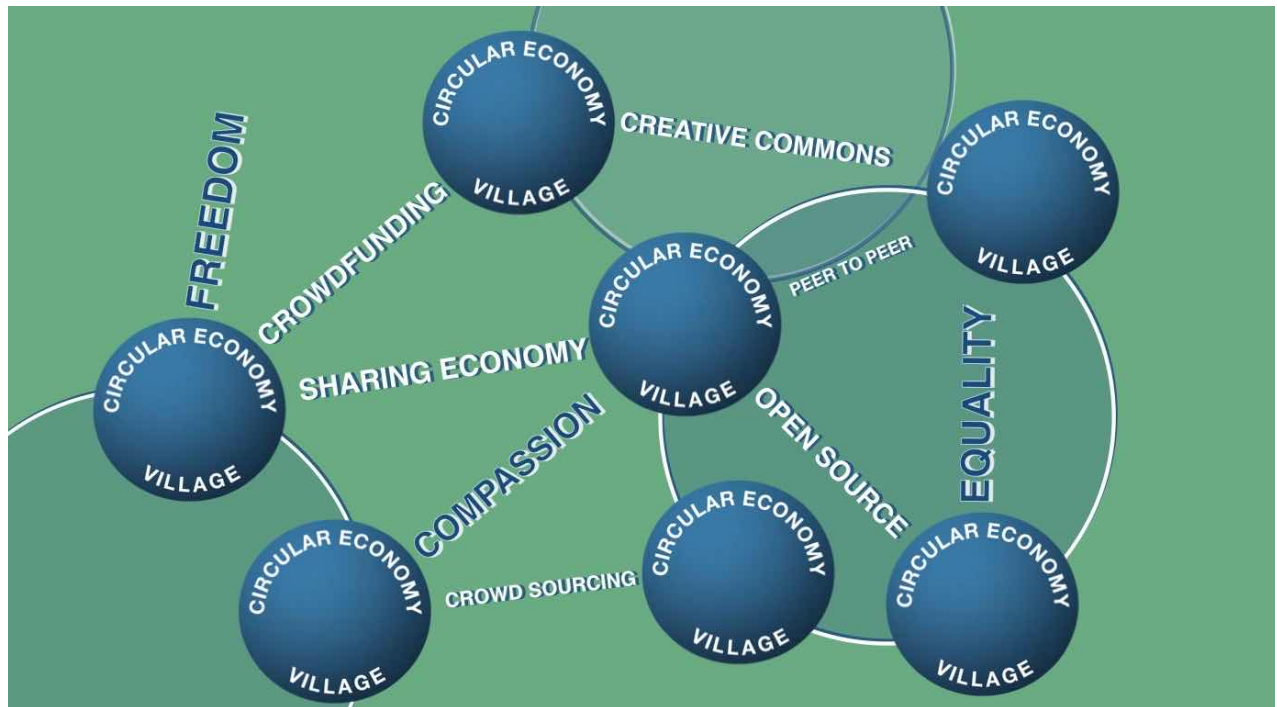
Figure 1. Land precincts schematic - minimum 40ha site area, approximately 5ha required for co-living and co-work hub

3.2. SUBSEQUENT NETWORKING OF VILLAGES

Each village or hub will be developed through separate development application processes. Subsequent operators and occupants of each hub may decide to connect in various ways with other hubs to form a network. Whilst the internal design of each village will aim to satisfy basic natural needs, the external design is of a network that can operate to satisfy more complex needs or share rarer skills and assets (**Figure 2**).

Greater resilience and economic efficiency would be achieved by groups of collaborating villages in a bioregion. The network can also operate as a **network of electric vehicle charging stations** enabling the sharing of a fleet of various electric vehicles.

Figure 2. Connected network of villages



4. JUSTIFICATION FOR STRATEGY

The proposed development form responds to a range of economic, social and environmental issues, while also adopting the language of current economic disruptions in various industries. This approach has not been feasible in the past and is emerging now only because of the availability of clean, localised renewable energy generation and storage systems. With energy systems designed to also cycle water through the landscape and manage water quality, a comprehensive and diverse regenerative agricultural system also becomes more feasible.

This section outlines the multiple benefits of local, precinct-scale, circular economy infrastructure, illustrating how the model addresses a range of issues that are currently the subject of significant public debate.

4.1. BUSHFIRE BUFFER & FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

In 2019, Australia suffered from extreme events including flooding in previously drought stricken Queensland that led to the destruction of infrastructure and loss of an estimated 500,000 cattle. The drought continues in most of NSW and the drying of the Murray-Darling basin has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of native fish. A drying continent increases the likelihood of heatwaves and bushfires. Bushfires in Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area in March preceded catastrophic fires on the mainland for much of the second half of the year.

Land use planning into the future must seek to mitigate the impacts of future events and adapt to the reality of a drying continent at constant risk of floods, droughts and bushfires.

Our approach is to utilise the best of modern technology for the construction and management of energy and water micro-grids to supply electricity and water to townships and also to manage surrounding landscape ecosystems. These managed landscapes, with improved soil health for retaining water, will serve as an effective buffer against future bushfires, while also creating a local, water-charged micro-climate that should reduce the future likelihood of droughts and bushfires in the area.

The planning process will include the strategic identification of preferred locations that are outside the zone of the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) event and most likely to limit the risks from bushfires.

4.2. REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

In addition to the climatic challenges referred to above, agriculture in Australia faces other significant challenges. The extreme climatic conditions are compounded by excessive extraction of water from creek and river systems and an unequally distributed irrigation channel system throughout Australia. Deforestation has resulted in the loss of topsoil and increased salinity. Industrial farming practices over the past 100 years have decreased biodiversity in landscapes and soils, resulting in falling productivity. All of these issues are progressively making farming less viable and succession planning for farmers is therefore more difficult.

Forward thinking farmers like Charles Massy in his book 'Call of the Reed Warbler—A New Agriculture, A New Earth' offer numerous examples of various approaches to agriculture referred to collectively as 'regenerative agriculture'. Massy is advocating for a revolution in farming practices. He identifies the principles of regenerative agriculture as follows:

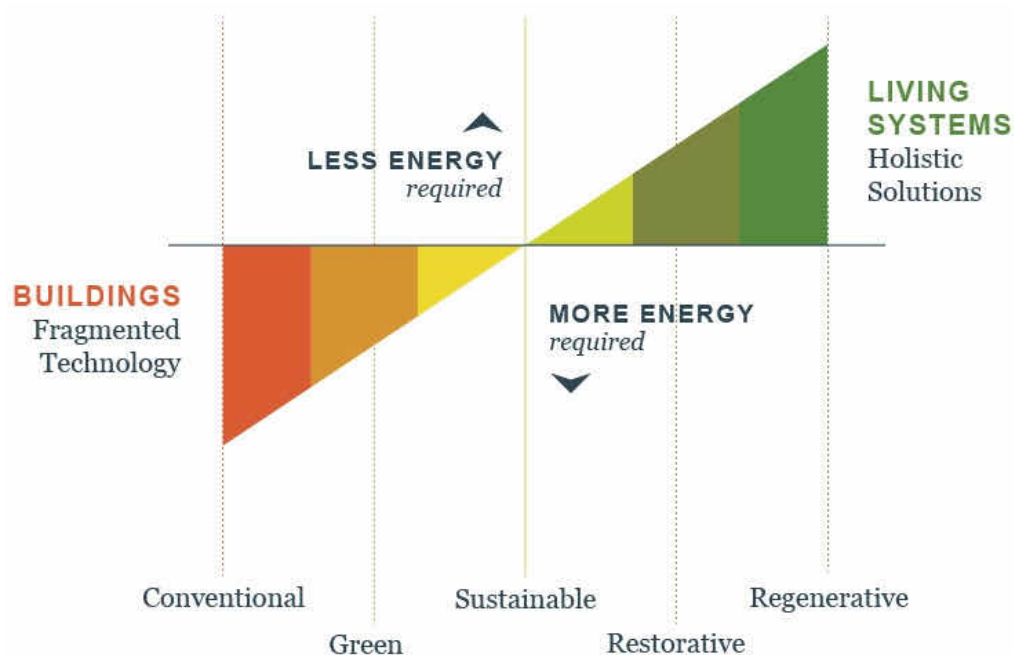
1. Maximising the capture of solar energy by fixing as many plant sugars as possible via photosynthesis;
2. Improving the water cycle, maximising water infiltration, storage and recycling in the soil;
3. Improving the soil-mineral cycle by creating healthy soils that contain and recycle a rich lode of diverse minerals and chemicals;
4. Maximising biodiversity and health of integrated, dynamic ecosystems at all levels.

Massy argues that a fifth principle is needed—a change in human attitudes. Only human agency can trigger landscape regeneration by working in harmony with natural systems. The necessary shift in attitude is from an extractive to a regenerative mindset. Instead of just taking from the land, we take and give back in equal measure. This concept of regeneration is equivalent to the ‘closing the loop’ narrative of the circular economy. Closing the loop implies thinking in systems and striving for zero waste because there is no waste in nature.

Increases in natural biodiversity need to be complemented with biodiverse agricultural systems. **Multiple enterprises and complementary land stewardship activities on one parcel of land is more labour intensive and therefore requires more accommodation for farm workers and land managers.**

The move towards regenerative agriculture also aligns with the emergence of the concept of regenerative development¹ as a new approach to land development. Proponents argue that we need to move beyond sustainability—sustaining ourselves and the environment—to regenerative development where we have a positive impact. This is best illustrated in the diagram in **Figure 3** by Bill Reed from Regenesiis. The Circular Economy Village integrates regenerative development with regenerative agriculture. Such holistic solutions also require less energy as natural systems are self-managing.

Figure 3. Trajectory of Ecological design (image used with permission)



¹ <https://www.thefifthestate.com.au/columns/spinifex/regenerative-development-in-australia/>

4.1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING & COST OF LIVING

The issue of housing affordability should be considered more broadly along with other cost of living pressures, including costs of food and electricity as well as transport costs. The cost of land can be minimised by purchasing rural land and **capturing the land value uplift** associated with the improvements on the site. This is possible if the entity that is operating the site when completed is also the entity that purchases the land at the outset.

With respect to the **cost of living**, the hub will be designed to provide food, water and energy for a discrete population. Having a known population, allows for the design process to provide for an abundance of these basic necessities. An over-supply of food, water and energy—the demand for which doesn't vary significantly with price anyway—drives their price towards zero. The passive architectural design of the built environment also reduces energy demand and therefore cost.

The design of a village as a live and work hub also substantially reduces **transport costs** by having work opportunities within walking distance of living environments. Quality internet connection at the co-working spaces also enhances the option of tele-commuting. A compact design with up to 200 people also makes vehicle sharing more feasible, while the local energy micro-grid can be designed to incorporate an electric vehicle charging station.

4.2. HEALTHY URBAN DESIGN

According to research by public health professionals, the built environment has an important role to play in supporting human health. In a review of the literature in this field of Healthy Urban Design by Kent et al (UNSW, 2011), three key interventions were identified that could support human health. These are; **getting people active, connecting and strengthening communities** and **providing healthy food options**.

The design of the Circular Economy Village integrates a food system of significant scale into the built environment providing not just healthy food options but the opportunity to collaborate with others in the community to provide that food. A walkable environment connecting a wide range of daily activities also allows people to get more active. This development model therefore has the potential to significantly improve health outcomes for the resident community.

4.3. FROM SEA-CHANGE & TREE-CHANGE TO E-CHANGE

Over recent decades, much of the migration from the cities to rural and regional areas has been attributed to individuals seeking a more relaxed lifestyle, that is, a sea-change (to coastal towns) or a tree change (to rural or farming areas).

In 2016 Demographer and Business Analyst Bernard Salt authored a report for NBN Co., in which he suggested that access to the internet is adding another dimension to this migration:

“We are witnessing a quiet lifestyle revolution ... The fusion of a relaxed lifestyle in tree-change and sea-change locations combined with super connectivity provided by the NBN network, is giving people even greater scope to take greater control of where they live and how they work. I predict a cultural shift or ‘e-change movement’ which could see the rise of new silicon suburbs or beaches in regional hubs as universal

access to fast broadband drives a culture of entrepreneurialism and innovation outside our capital cities.”²

We believe that embracing the e-change represents an **important economic development strategy and opportunity for regional and rural Councils**. The Circular Economy Village development model could help drive an e-change movement to your local government area.

4.4. ONE PLANET LIVING

In the process of satisfying everyone’s needs and aspirations, an economic system should not exceed the capacity of the natural environment to regenerate itself. This is sometimes referred to as living within planetary boundaries or ‘One Planet Living’.

It is a well known principle in economics that, for certain basic necessities, people buy the same amount whether the price rises or falls. The demand for basic needs is said to be broadly ‘inelastic’, which also means that the **total** amount of food, water and energy needed by households is relatively stable. It is therefore possible to design a place for the needs of a **discrete population** by estimating their demand for food, water, energy and also living and work spaces.

A key design approach for the development is that it will start with an assumed population size of no greater than 200 persons. The final (potentially smaller) design size will be determined by the capacity of the chosen site and its supporting infrastructure to sustain the population. The community demographics will initially be assumed to be broadly consistent with the age profile of New South Wales.

4.5. UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME & THE FUTURE OF WORK

There is a growing debate and interest in the concept of a Universal and Unconditional Basic Income (UBI). Some of the reasons for the debate include:

- Concern about the inequality in distribution of income and wealth,
- A desire to simplify highly strained welfare systems, and
- The need to address the issue of job losses caused by automation of economic processes.

As technology continues to advance, making many traditional jobs obsolete, it is important to start creating resilient places where people can work to directly satisfy their basic needs, relying less on jobs that provide an income to satisfy these same basic needs. Rather than debating how to fund a basic income in monetary terms, we believe that it would be far more effective and efficient to create places that provide peoples’ basic needs directly.

This also addresses a significant gap in the UBI debate, which aims to address the inequality in the distribution of wealth but does not address how that wealth is created. Regenerative land development complements the UBI debate as it aims to increase our **natural capital** through restoration and maintenance of land and water, and also plant and animal life, while minimising waste and other negative impacts.

An economic system should also provide everyone’s basic needs as efficiently as possible in order to maximise the free time and space for everyone to pursue more useful and interesting activities.

² National Broadband Network (NBN Co. Ltd.) Media Release (Monday 08 February 2016), ‘e-change’ is the new sea-change in 2016

The development approach supports people as the uncertainty about work in the future increases. Work opportunities include the maintenance of the water, food and energy infrastructure as well as the management of shared spaces and facilities. The management of food systems could include everything from agriculture, food processing, preserving, also preparation and cooking in on-site restaurants, as well as management of organic waste.

4.6. TRANSITION FROM A LINEAR TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Debates in relation to waste management have transformed in recent years to a discussion about the need for a shift to a circular economy. A useful definition of the Circular Economy is provided by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a leading European advocate of the transition from the current environmentally damaging and wasteful, 'linear' economy to a Circular Economy:

Looking beyond the current “take, make and dispose” extractive industrial model, the circular economy is restorative and regenerative by design. Relying on system-wide innovation, it aims to redefine products and services to design waste out, while minimising negative impacts. Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources, the circular model builds economic, natural and social capital.³

From the above definition we can extract some of the key design principles of the land development project such as life-cycle planning, thinking in systems and striving for zero waste by adopting a restorative and regenerative approach.

It is noted that discussions about a Circular Economy primarily relate to product design to minimise waste. We argue that recent advancements in renewable energy technologies—and associated cost decreases—makes the Circular Economy principles applicable to infrastructure and the design of villages.

Taking a systems approach, an energy micro-grid will monitor and distribute the renewable energy that is generated and stored on site. The energy system will also power a water system that will be cycled through the site, providing for residents, irrigating crops and watering animals. Striving for zero waste can be interpreted as matching supply with demand so the living and work spaces will be passively designed to minimise energy demand. More generally, the energy, water, food and built systems will be integrated to maximise efficiency. Water may store energy or generate energy. Natural systems can manage water quality and quantity. Food waste can improve soil or generate energy using a bio-digester.

Also, it is proposed to incorporate various waste-to-resource micro-factories to encourage innovative product and business model development using the principles of the Circular Economy.

³ Ellen MacArthur Foundation <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy>

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The feasibility of any land development project hinges on whether it is possible to obtain a development approval. If Council wishes to enable the development of Circular Economy Villages, then a pathway to approval must be available as it is for other forms of development. This would include, for example, strategic and locality planning, permissibility of the development in certain zones, establishment of development controls, infrastructure requirements and community engagement processes.

In the following sections we set out the various elements of such a policy framework that PolisPlan could assist Council to establish.

5.1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

In order for any land development to occur, it must be consistent with the local community's vision for the future as expressed in the Local Authority's long term strategic plans. The project will ensure that local strategic documents, such as rural land strategy, housing strategy and economic development strategy, incorporate the necessary language to support Circular Economy Villages. For example, there should be explicit statements that support:

- The following economic development opportunities:
 - creating co-living work hubs to attract digital nomads, e-changers and eco-tourists
 - creating healthy and resilient built environments that are affordable and have access to fresh organic produce.
 - the identification and provision of Circular Economy business models and technologies for converting waste into resources or new products
 - research and development into new technologies and business models related to integrated energy and water micro-grids, regenerative agriculture and circular economy.
- The rezoning of land to enable regenerative, adaptive and cyclic development. This would be subject to clear mechanisms for staging the land rezoning process such that certain criteria are satisfied prior to the project advancing. This is necessary to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is provided before rural land is rezoned for urban purposes.

5.2. LOCALITY PLANNING

Develop the methodological framework for identifying appropriate localities within a Local Government Area and/or bioregion where this form of development could occur, by considering the following issues:

- Characterisation of Circular Economy Villages under the current planning provisions and identification of zones in which they would be permissible
- The needs of the natural environment, such as environmental flows in waterways and the need for restoration of landscapes
- Assessment of risks, especially bushfires and floods
- Local indigenous knowledge and heritage
- The needs of the local community and integration with existing townships
- Optimal environmental conditions for producing water, energy and food
- Strategies for generating other economic opportunities.

In accordance with Section 3.9 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP & A Act, NSW), all Councils must prepare a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS). This will set out a 20-year vision for land use in the local government area. This is a recent amendment to the EP & A Act and regional councils must have their first statement in place by 1 July 2020.

The LSPS provides an ideal opportunity for Councils – in consultation with their community – to introduce this development model into their local planning framework. The LSPS should explicitly refer to Circular Economy Villages (or equivalent terminology) and should include objectives such as for future land development to be regenerative in character, that development integrates regenerative agriculture and that it provides for all the energy and water needs plus a specified proportion of food for a discrete population. The LSPS should also:

- identify the general localities (not the specific sites) where this development would be permitted; and
- refer to a policy document or chapter in the Development Control Plan (DCP) for more information.

5.3. LAND TENURE & SUBDIVISION

Although the design of Circular Economy Villages will provide residents with private spaces, these are not currently proposed to be separately owned dwellings. The access to a range of shared spaces and facilities and the intended flexibility of design and fluidity of movement of individuals through the site requires a model of collective ownership. Accordingly, land subdivision is not considered appropriate for this design. The currently preferred approach is for the land and assets to be held in single ownership from initial purchase, through the development phase and in perpetuity. Future residents and investors could purchase shares in the managing entity, while future residents would enter into a lease agreement for the desired period of occupation.

Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of existing models for collective land ownership, including strata title, community title, company title, Community Land Trusts, Multiple Occupancies and any others.

Determine the most appropriate approach, not just for residents who wish to be settled for an extended period but also for nomads, travellers and other visitors who might stay for a shorter period.

5.4. BUILDING & LANDSCAPE DESIGN CRITERIA

Current approaches for regulating the design of the built environment—such as floor space ratios, building height controls, setbacks and open space requirements—seek to establish minimum standards for development. The objective for Circular Economy Villages is to seek to maximise the aesthetic quality and functionality so as to minimise ongoing living costs. Also, the design aims to regenerate the land and have a positive impact on the environment, not just minimise the impacts.

Develop performance-based criteria (rather than prescriptive controls) to manage and enable these outcomes to be achieved and adaptively managed over the lifespan of the development. These would include:

- The minimum total land area and the proportions of the site area for the three (3) precincts (ie. (a) Conservation and/or bush regeneration, (b) Agriculture and (c) Live/ Work hub)
- Minimum requirements for infrastructure provision, including open space, community spaces, water management, food and energy provision
- Design principles for buildings
- Affordable housing criteria

5.5. COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Develop a methodological framework for community engagement that includes:

- Engagement of the community in the development of a common, locality specific vision that will remain viable and sustainable into the future
- Identification appropriate localities for this form of development
- Comparison of different governance systems
- Identification of nutrition needs, desires and expectations
- Co-creation of the built environment
- Development of waste minimisation strategies

5.6. WATER & ENERGY MICRO-GRID

Renewable energy generation and water harvesting, storage and distribution will be tailored to the geography and climate of each development site. Work in partnership with Council and with other relevant authorities to determine what standards should be adopted.

Consider as a minimum:

- Review town planning provisions related to Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)
- Review infrastructure contributions plans and other systems for funding water systems
- Review infrastructure plans to integrate with current water supply and sewerage systems
- Review requirements for connection to the electricity grid
- Determine required water quality and quantity controls including for the management of blackwater and enabling alternative toilet designs
- Identify requirements for environmental services including flows to connected waterways and biodiversity maintenance.

5.7. TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT PLANNING

The objective of transport and traffic planning in this project is to facilitate the transition to a non-fossil fuel dependent transport system, while also maximising the opportunity for vehicle sharing. Develop a conceptual transport planning methodology:

- for movement within the site
- for local connections to the adjoining township and
- to provide shared assets for long distance transport.

The methodology would acknowledge the relatively high number of internal economic activities and provide:

- an internal transport system, vehicle exclusion zones and opportunities for bikes, Segways, carts and the like
- selection of vehicle types based on the ability to generate fuel on site, such as electric vehicles or vehicles powered by biofuels produced by on-site bio-digesters

Determine likely vehicle movements to and from this form of development to inform discussions with traffic authorities and to enable the preparation of traffic impact assessments.

5.8. NUTRITION & FOOD SYSTEM FOOTPRINT

Develop the methodological framework for converting nutrition plans into agricultural plans for a discrete population, generally along the following lines:

- Identify a range of nutrition plans, including vegan, vegetarian and various meat intake diets
- Identify appropriate integrated polyculture agricultural methods and associated expected yields from each
- For a given demographic of 200 individuals, convert nutrition plans into agricultural plans
- Determine land, energy, and water demand
- Prepare development controls, including minimum required lot size and water quality and quantity controls.

5.9. WASTE MANAGEMENT

Assess the impact of Circular Economy Villages on Council's waste management processes, including:

- potential savings for Council through the conversion of waste into resources or new products
- future charges that will be applied to Circular Economy Villages for waste management
- processes for negotiating waste management agreements with Circular Economy Villages.

5.10. COUNCIL RATES

Assess the impact of Circular Economy Villages on Council's system of land rates and determine appropriate Council rates to be applied and payable to Council.

5.11. PILOT PROJECT MASTER PLAN & AGREEMENT

The complexity and scope of the required changes to the planning framework suggests that it may be useful to stage the process. The review of strategies and locality planning could proceed as a first step. One of the preferred localities could then be identified as a site for a pilot project. The remainder of the planning framework could then be established in the form of a site-specific Development Control Plan.

The Development Control Plan should clearly describe the development form and the process through which this development outcome could be achieved addressing all the matters outlined above. There should also be a requirement to prepare a Concept Development Application in accordance with Division 4.4 of the EP & A Act together with a Planning Instrument Amendment in accordance with Division 3.5 of the EP & A Act.

Council, together with the land-owner, could then seek tenders for the development of the site, requiring the submission of a masterplan and Voluntary Planning Agreement.

The proposed development will include various facilities, assets and open spaces to service the population within the development site. Some of these will also be available to the proximate township and other communities in the broader area. It would therefore be appropriate to prepare a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) policy, including a standard template VPA that provides a framework for the delivery and management of infrastructure, both on the subject site and the surrounding area. VPAs may be made pursuant to Subdivision 2 of Division 7.1 of the EP&A Act 1979 (NSW). This should address:

- effect on any development contributions required pursuant to Sections 7.11 or 7.12 of the EP&A Act;
- effect on any charges for water supply, sewerage and storm-water drainage facilities under s64 of the Local Government Act 1993;
- requirement for the VPA to run with the land pursuant to Section 7.6 of the EP&A Act;
- identification of infrastructure requirements and allocation of responsibilities between the land owner and Council
- effect on waste levies; and
- effect on ordinary rates or requirement for any special rates
- timing and staging of the development.

The process of developing the pilot project would highlight any issues or concerns with the planning framework, which could be refined before further localities were released for development.

6. CONCLUSION

PolisPlan would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how we might collaborate with Council to draft and implement the town planning framework to enable the development of Circular Economy Villages. Such developments would enhance the economic, social and environmental resilience of rural towns and villages in regional Australia.

PolisPlan is in the process of forming partnerships with architects, engineers, developers, community groups, Community Housing Providers, finance experts and investors who wish to contribute to the advancement of this development model.

The establishment of such a policy framework would provide the certainty necessary to attract investors and future residents to ensure developments are delivered.