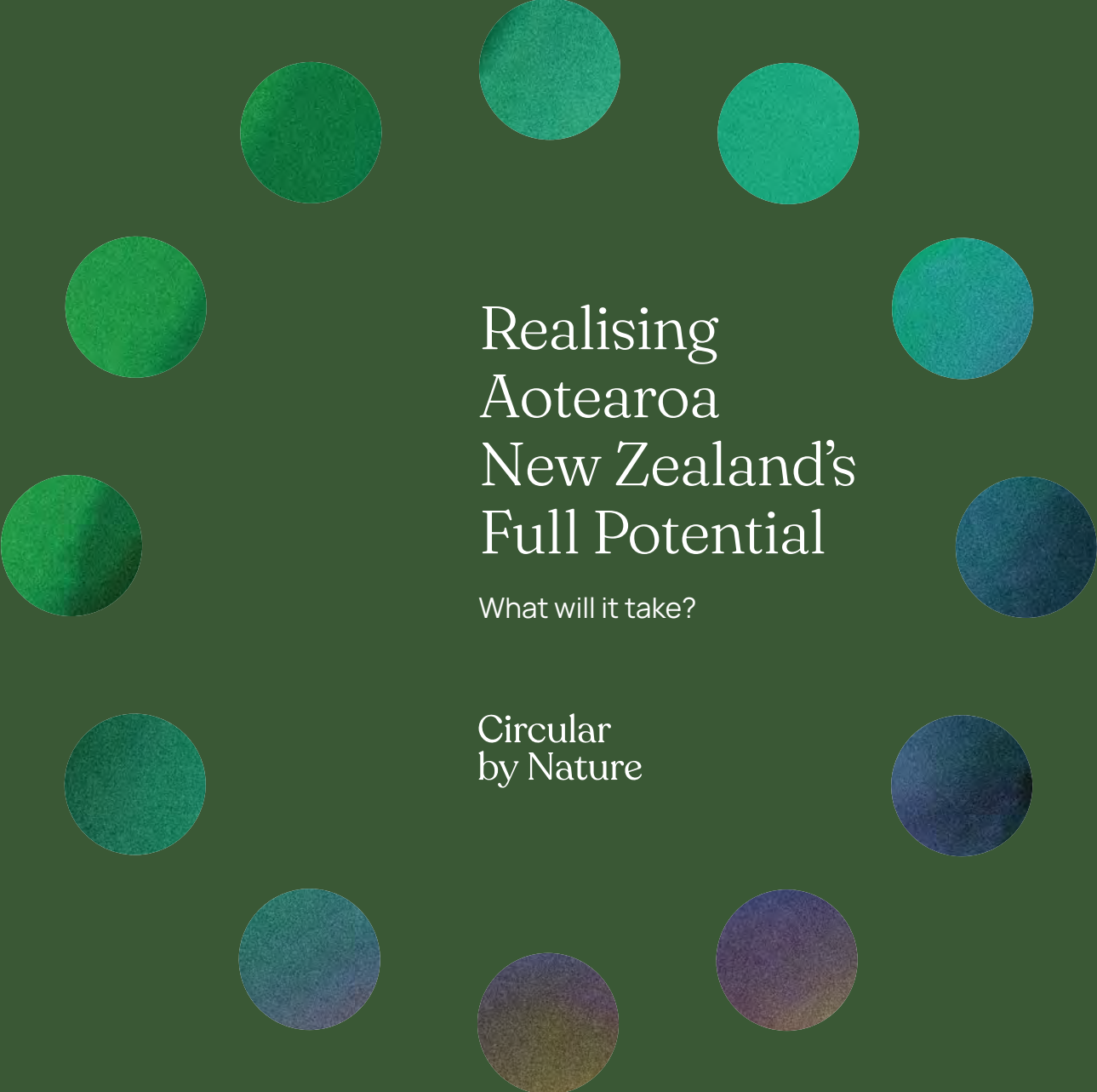




Realising Aotearoa New Zealand's Full Potential

What will it take?

Circular
by Nature



A truly vital and enriching
economy is within our reach.

But it waits for us to realise it.

Opportunity lives in the spaces
in between – beyond neatly
labelled industries, sectors
and communities.

By returning to our nature,
we can shape a circular future
that generates lasting value
for Aotearoa New Zealand.

How to navigate this paper:

PART ONE: Why this? Why now?

Understand where value is being lost, why a circular economy is essential within an increasingly resource constrained world, and the natural edge we can bring as Aotearoa New Zealand.

PART TWO: Circular futures

Explore the costs and complexities of life in Aotearoa New Zealand. Then envision how circular principles and resource flows will enrich our economy, environment, and communities across three areas of our circular future:

- How we live
- How we eat
- How we move

PART THREE: Making it a reality

Use this white paper and its three recommendations as a roadmap to coordinate action, shape a strategic framework and embed circularity into legal settings to progress a stronger economy for us all across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Kia ora.

You are holding a strategic white paper on Aotearoa New Zealand’s future circular economy — designed to be your decision making tool in the boardroom, the minister’s office, and the council chamber.

A note from the authors

My hope is that Circular by Nature not only inspires but also guides decision makers towards a future that benefits people and the planet.

– Louise Nash

I could never truly imagine a circular Aotearoa. The work here changed that. Now I invite you to make it yours.

– Samantha Walmsley-Bartlett

There are so many incredible initiatives underway across the motu - glimpses into Aotearoa's circular future. Let's build it together.

– Kelly McClean

New Zealand has what it takes to be a prosperous and resilient nation – with natural edge.

We have the resources, the people, the innovative mindset, and the care for place that most countries can only aspire to. But right now, we are leaving an extraordinary amount of unrealised value on the table.

We cannot afford to, and nor should we want to, be a nation that wastes its resources.

Our communities, businesses, and environments that depend on our food, land, and materials are bearing the cost of linear, take-make-waste systems in the form of waste, productivity loss, inequity, insecurity, disconnection and environmental harm. These are challenges that require a system shift to a fundamentally different way of accessing, restoring, realising and retaining the value of resources.

Our current economic constraints provide the opportunity to put circularity into the national conversation. Doing nothing costs more than acting. New Zealanders are already engaging in a wider range of circular behaviours—whether they know it by that term or not—and are open to doing more, but they face systemic barriers to realise this value shift.

This is not a problem that will go away by itself.

According to the UN, global municipal waste is expected to grow from 2.1 to 3.8 billion tonnes a year by 2050 and continuing business-as-usual waste management would cost the world US\$640.3 billion a year by 2050... **Compare that to the projected net gain from a circular economy pathway of US\$108.5 billion a year.**

1/3 of economic value is lost due to extractive practices globally.

Globally, we see that for every €3 of economic value created, around €1 is lost to take-make-waste practices. The five pathways of value loss include; processing losses, energy losses, food losses and waste, end-of-life waste, premature deterioration of fixed capital.

New Zealand is losing value because our economy is geared towards a take-make-waste approach to resource use:

- Of the 130-135 million tonnes of materials we extract from our own land annually, 90% are organic items (food, wood, crops) and non-metallic minerals (limestone, coal, clay). Two-thirds are exported as raw commodities; we retain one third for domestic use.
- We consume 107 million tonnes of natural resources each year, approximately 21 tonnes per person, which is 60–65% more than the global average of 13 tonnes per person. 72% of this is used for food, housing, infrastructure, and mobility.
- Around 60% of our resource use is imported, much of it, like fuel and fertiliser, is virgin and single-use by design.
- New Zealand spent NZ\$1.5 billion importing the fertilisers that grow our food in 2022 and another \$700 million on diesel to run the farms that produce it.
- 100% of New Zealand's refined fuel is imported.
- We've been identified as among the highest waste generators per capita in the developed world by The World Bank.
- Of the roughly 450,000 tonnes of plastic waste we generate each year, only around 15% is recycled.
- 750 kilograms of resources are sent to landfill by every New Zealander each year, 49% above the OECD average.
- Wasted food alone costs the average household over \$1,400 a year.
- The economic output we generate per tonne of material consumed is 40% below the OECD average at just USD\$1,475, meaning the same resource use could be producing significantly more value.

A circular economy is our pathway to value creation, connection and productivity.

An economy based on circular principles will design out waste and pollution before it becomes a cost, keep materials in flow to realise value across full lifecycles, and regenerate living systems to provide for human health and economic prosperity. It does not mean closing our economy to global trade, but rather, it is the practical work of realising and retaining value embedded in our resources, products and services. We mine our economy for valuable resources, rather than our ecology.



Circularity is not a new idea for Aotearoa New Zealand.

“Applied indigenous knowledge, held within a Māori worldview, can provide the holistic blueprint for redefining our relationships with both the planet and each other.”

Kore Hiakai, 2024

In te ao Māori, the reciprocal and cyclical relationship between people, resources, and the environment is foundational.

Kaitiakitanga as an intergenerational responsibility, not an aspiration. The valuable Māori economy can act as a catalyst to help transform Aotearoa New Zealand's economy to be with Mātauranga Māori and systems approaches to guide decision-making. The circular economy, at its best, is a modern expression of principles New Zealand has always carried and is recognised for on the world stage.

Done well, the transition from linear to circular resource use delivers outcomes for all New Zealanders:

- Our homes and products are designed to last, be repaired and shared, rather than a waste burden for ratepayers.
- We produce diverse food that regenerates our land, distribute food to all New Zealanders and turn by-products into ingredients.
- We prioritise connection and return nutrients to soil so that it can nourish production systems over generations.
- Our transport systems are renewable, allow citizens and goods to move efficiently and capture and use critical materials across multiple lifetimes.

Circularity strengthens both our domestic and our export positions by reducing dependency on imported inputs, building resilience against supply chain disruptions, and meeting the standards our trading partners require when our products enter their markets. Nations that circulate more of their own resource flows are less exposed when trade routes close, tariffs shift, or pandemics interrupt supply, lowering costs for households and businesses, creating new jobs and capabilities in every region, and putting less pressure on the natural systems that define and support us. At a time when automation and AI are reshaping work, circularity offers practical pathways into place-based, skilled employment that cannot easily be offshored.

Circularity is no longer only about minimizing waste at the margins. It is about regaining control over resources and operational capacity that determine whether growth plans are realistic or aspirational. No industry is exempt from this shift.

The Circularity Gap Report 2026 identified that the global economy loses €25.4 trillion in economic value every year, that's nearly 31% of global GDP, through linear material practices. International practice bears this out. The latest UNIDO and Chatham House global stocktake, identify 4,319 policy actions across 101 national circular economy roadmaps and strategies, many of which are our trading partners, with 33 embedding circularity into their trade architecture.

Three-quarters of our extracted natural resources flow into markets actively making circular transformations:

- China, our largest trading partner, released a new five-year plan in July 2026 targeting a 16% lift in resource productivity and an 8 trillion yuan recycling industry by 2030.
- India is building a national resource recovery system at pace.
- Australia has committed to recovering 80% of its resources by 2035.
- The EU's Ecodesign regulations and digital product passports are already in force.
- Scotland and Ireland have legislated national circular economy strategies.

Business is moving with circular policy.

This was reinforced at the WEF's 2026 Annual Meeting in Davos, where business and government decision-makers positioned circularity as an industrial strategy that strengthens resilience and resource security, competitiveness and growth, and environmental sustainability at the same time.

The Forum's own Global Risks Report 2026 also ranks natural resource shortages and concentration among the top global risks over the next decade. European data from 222 European companies across 14 industries, found that the more circular a company is, the lower its risk of debt default over both a one-year and five-year time horizon with superior risk adjusted returns.

Crucially, this global transition toward regulations for circularity means that for New Zealand exporters, circularity is becoming a baseline requirement for market access, not a point of difference.

75%

Global business leaders say circularity is important or critical to their organisation.

That demand has rapidly risen from 40% three years ago in 2024, and the figure is expected to rise to 95% by 2027.

While the world increases resilience and reduces the cost of living through circularity – New Zealand's economy is being held back.

Until now, New Zealand legislation has pursued a consistently weak model of circularity.

Peer-reviewed analysis of New Zealand central government circular economy policy, funded by Āmiomio Aotearoa and published in 2025, concluded that between 2017 and 2023, both Ministry for the Environment (MFE) and Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) pursued a consistently "weak model" of circularity, focused disproportionately on end-of-life recycling and waste management rather than upstream system redesign and producer responsibility, where value is created and retained in our economy.

Since 2023, even that weak model has been partially dismantled, including the removal of circularity as a named strategy in the Emission Reduction Plan.

Independent research which Circular by Nature commissioned with Kantar in 2026 showed that New Zealanders are already engaging in circular practices at a citizen level but New Zealand's lack of policies, standards and system wide engagement with circularity limits adoption and scaling.

This is holding us back from the necessary productivity gains New Zealand needs in an increasingly costly and resource scarce world.

It is time to consider how we stimulate a more valuable economy that is circular by nature.

We have come together to create **Circular by Nature: Realising Aotearoa New Zealand's full potential, what will it take?**

A strategic platform that translates a decade of New Zealand-specific research and on-the-ground implementation for decision-makers, through the lens of everyday life – how we live, how we eat, and how we move in a circular Aotearoa, New Zealand.

In how we live, we make the case that products can be redesigned – not through individual sacrifice, but through better infrastructure, smarter systems and clearer rules that make the circular choice the default choice.

In how we eat, nutrition becomes a priority, not a premium. Nutrients are returned to living soil, diverse crops are made into diverse foods in shared processing facilities that are located much closer to where they are grown. Our public procurement expectations and spaces play a pivotal role in changing the food we eat in our schools, hospitals and homes.

Lastly, in how we move, we look at circular transportation and logistics. What our vehicles and infrastructure are made of, and what happens to those materials over time. The energy systems that power all of it. And whether we're planning for the full cost – financial, social and environmental – of a transition already underway.

By making the circular economy real, we make it actionable.

This is an opportunity for all New Zealanders:

- New Zealanders are already embracing circular behaviours – with room to go much further into reuse, repair and repurpose across clothing, furniture, tools, vehicles and children's items.
- New Zealand households are sitting on \$5.2 billion in sellable pre-loved goods. 75% of us have unused items worth \$1,300 on average.
- A high-ambition textile stewardship scheme could deliver \$602 million in net benefit to the economy by 2038, and grow sector employment up to 6%.
- Mānuka makes up a minority of the honey we produce by volume, but provides 82% of our honey export revenue, contributing to a global market projected to be worth USD\$1.3 billion by 2032.
- MBIE has identified thirty high-value bioeconomy products New Zealand is positioned to produce, from biocosmetics to marine bioactives, feeding a global bioactive ingredients market headed for USD\$402.3 billion by 2033.
- The Energy Transitions Commission estimates that by 2050, more than half of global demand for battery materials like cobalt, graphite and lithium could be met by recycled secondary supply – value New Zealand could capture instead of losing, if we build recovery capacity now.
- Two independent estimates put New Zealand's circular bioeconomy in the tens of billions: PwC values it at NZ\$30 billion in additional GDP by 2030; the Sustainable Business Council and Climate Leaders' Coalition separately size an innovation-driven pathway at \$22–33 billion a year by 2035–2050.
- Circular interventions in construction, manufacturing and food could cut 1.5–1.9 million tonnes of CO₂-e a year, a 2.7–3.4% reduction on 2021 net emissions.
- In Auckland alone, circular would create \$6.3–8.8 billion in additional economic activity by 2030, plus a 2,700 kt CO₂-e cut.
- 351+ organisations, including Zespri, Silver Fern Farms, Lion, Beca, Tauranga City Council and Rescued Kitchen, have invested in XLabs circular economy training, and 88% had implemented their plans within 6–12 months.

“The transition to a circular economy is, ultimately, about designing economic systems in which our capacity to create value is widely distributed.”

– Ken Webster and Emanuele Di Francesco, 2026

Realising our potential with circular resource and value flows.

This whitepaper brings together evidence from over 220 case studies, academic papers and reports – and contributions from over 100 practitioners, industry professionals, and policy makers. From this foundation, we explore the potential of circular futures in our everyday lives and offer a roadmap to start enabling the shift.

National alignment across government, business and communities is critical for shifting circularity from a weakened 'bolt-on' approach to a 'built in' mindset that unlocks productivity and value creation.

This paper presents three strategic recommendations:

1. The Circular Futures Activation Group:

Establish an expert advisory group that guides and coordinates industry leaders with prioritised taskforces. This would be enabled by government and co-designed with industry, iwi/Māori, regions and research partners to coordinate action across four key industry-led workstreams: housing and construction, products and packaging, food and fibre, mobility and energy. The Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT) could provide stewardship, with named agency officials linked to each workstream and clear roles for Ministry Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and other relevant agencies. The purpose is not simply to advise Ministers, but to build an investable pipeline that turns isolated projects into a coordinated national transition.

2. The Circular Framework:

Develop a national circular economy framework. This would be led by (MCERT), with clear roles for MBIE, MFAT, MPI, and other relevant agencies to set national priorities, responsibilities, sequencing and near-term actions. The framework should join up regional plans, industry plans and research programmes rather than replace them, and identify the levers needed to accelerate local and regional manufacturing, secondary materials markets, diversified food production, circular procurement, bio-based resources, trade readiness and recovery systems.

3. The Regulatory Settings:

Embed circularity in policy, planning and regulatory settings. This would identify practical entry points across the Emissions Reduction Plan, Planning Bill, Waste Legislation Reform, Natural Environment Bill, procurement standards, infrastructure planning and sector policy. The aim is to give circularity clearer status in decision-making, with measurable objectives, funded actions, assigned responsibilities and review points that support long-term investment and implementation.

Roadmap to start enabling the shift.



Across all three, circularity in Aotearoa New Zealand must uphold Te Tiriti, protect mātauranga Māori, and recognise Māori-led, place-based approaches as central to the transition.

- (1) **The activation group** prioritises where coordination and expertise are needed.
- (2) **The circular framework** maps how plans, responsibilities and levers fit together towards agreed targets.
- (3) **The policy, planning and regulatory settings** enable long-term investment, implementation and value creation.

“Circular by Nature reflects what the research consistently tells us: progress on circularity accelerates through coordinated action - innovation, supportive policy and standards, strong supply chain governance, and shared goals across the system.”

- Joya Kemper

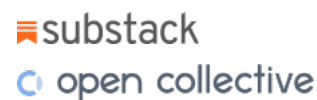
Circular by Nature is an independent, strategic platform to lift ambition and coordinate circular economy action in New Zealand, registered with the Gift Collective as our fundholder.

It was founded by three independent practitioners: Samantha Walmsley-Bartlett, Kelly McClean, and Louise Nash. Coming together to develop a strategic platform to address the gaps in awareness and understanding of the actions required across the system to enable a shift from a linear to circular economy across Aotearoa.

Our Kaupapa | Purpose:

Inspire, educate and enable decision-makers to transition away from take-make-waste resource use reliant on fossil fuels and replace it with circular business models, practices and policies to help all New Zealanders manage our resources within our planetary boundaries, reducing waste, lowering costs and reducing emissions to achieve a resilient, thriving society, nature and economy.

Follow and support our work:



Contact us at: kiaoracircularbynature@gmail.com

This white paper was written by:



Louise Nash is an economist, creator of the *Circular by Design™* methodology, and founder and CEO of Circularity, Aotearoa's leading circular economy design and advisory practice, and a certified B Corp. She has led over 168 circular transformation strategies across packaging, textiles, food, plastics, transport, timber, and water, keeping over one million tonnes of New Zealand's resources in use and out of landfill. Her XLabs circular innovation labs have built the capability of nearly 400 organisations, from business leaders to community practitioners. A COP30, Sustainability Leaders, and Economic Development Innovation award recipient, Louise has worked across New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Brazil, Canada, Europe, and Dubai. Her philosophy is simple: work with nature, not against it, and make that work accessible to everyone who wants to be part of it.



Samantha Walmsley-Bartlett is a systems change leader focused on enabling regeneration across landscapes and value chains, shifting relationships, incentives, and decisions at every level, from grower cooperatives to global shipping routes. As Head of Sustainability at Zespri International, she developed the first industry-wide electrification pathway for kiwifruit and built collaborative models between growers and packhouse businesses. At Circularity, she led New Zealand's first measurement of circular solutions using the Circular Transition Indicator tool, co-developed the XLabs Circular Economy Programme, and her 999 Days of Sharing Circular Solutions connected businesses and communities to over 200 practical circular solutions. She co-founded Fairgrow, addressing food insecurity and waste at community level, has contributed to Future Whenua and is on the board of Future Farmers, two networks focused on the long-term resilience of New Zealand's land and farming communities. Samantha brings a rare experience of taking the circular economy from strategy to the ground, with the community relationships to prove it.



Kelly McClean is a strategy, design, and sustainability specialist with over 12 years of experience leading innovation and circular economy projects across textiles, agriculture, manufacturing, FMCG, packaging, and infrastructure. She was a key contributor to MBIE's circular bioeconomy research and engagement programme, focusing on manufacturing, food, the built environment, and digital enablers. Kelly is also co-founder of social enterprises CommonKind and Reuse Aotearoa. She currently leads Future of Fibre Aotearoa, an industry-led enabler. Her work consistently bridges the technical and the human, bringing methodological rigour that gives a document like this its credibility with expert audiences, and the systems design thinking that makes it legible and actionable for businesses, councils, and communities working through the transition on the ground.



This publication carries the experiences and expertise of practitioners, producers, manufacturers, community organisations, iwi, and businesses across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Made with the same interconnectivity that our circular future demands, Circular by Nature drew on evidence and experiences of wide-ranging industries, communities, and experts to create a vision of a circular future and a roadmap to make it a reality.

It is designed to be both authoritative and shared.

50+ organisations.
15+ industries.
Three workshops.
15 interviews.
100+ individuals.
Seven peer reviews.
240 articles, papers and publications.

The Circular by Nature team is grateful to everyone who actively engaged in workshops, kōrero, and review as we developed this white paper.

This is a small snapshot. You can find out more about who contributed to this work within the appendix on page 200.



"Circular by Nature is a comprehensive and insightful document which sets out the case for a transformation in New Zealand: from contributing to a climate wrecking take-make-dispose economy to a circular economy based on innovation and good governance and one which is inclusive and contributes to the wellbeing of every citizen"
– Ken Webster

"Unless New Zealanders can see, feel, and find their place within a more regenerative future, continuing on the current extractive and costly path remains too easy. Circular by Nature is a powerful articulation of evidence and vision that makes redirection possible."
– Bree Asmus

"The missing piece is the connecting infrastructure: coordination, policy settings, procurement, measurement, investment pathways and institutional durability."
– Jodie Bricout

"Moving towards a circular economy in New Zealand is a critical opportunity. Clare is proud to be supporting Circular by Nature in their important work and provide an inclusive space for people to become involved"
– Clare Foundation

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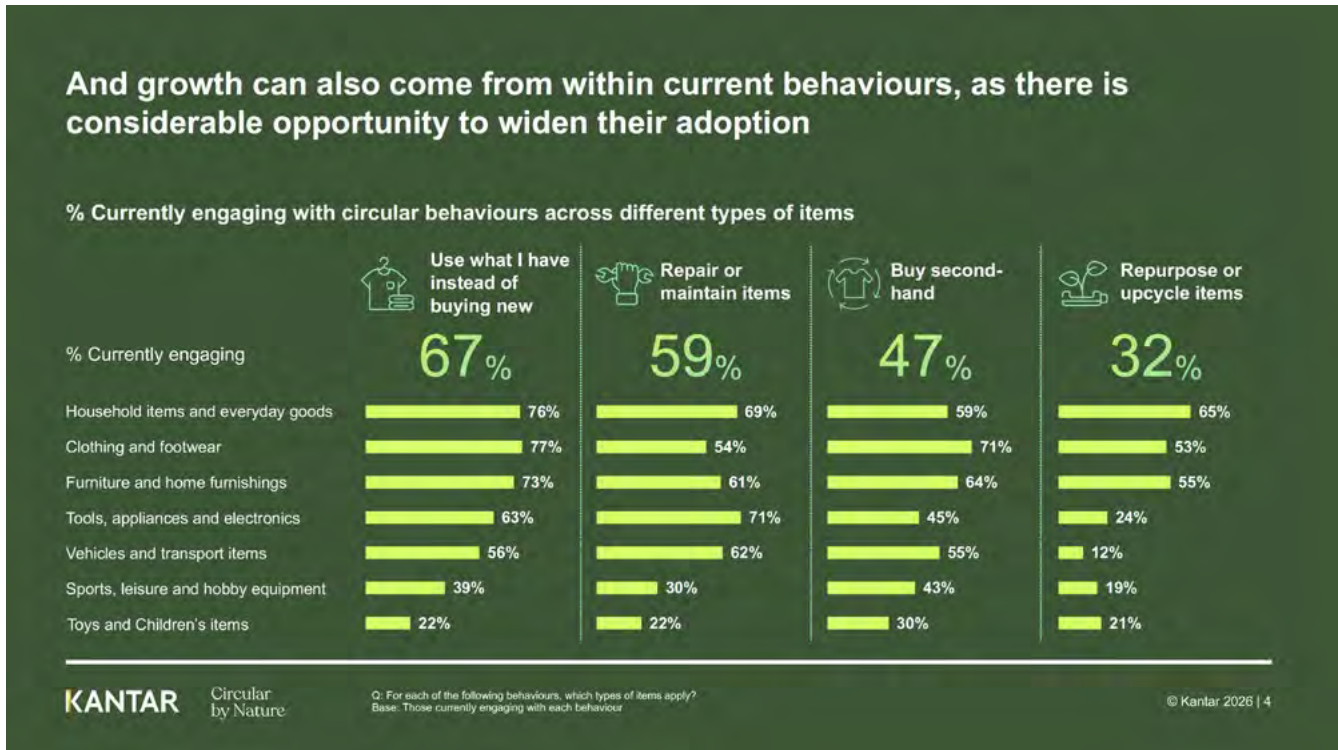
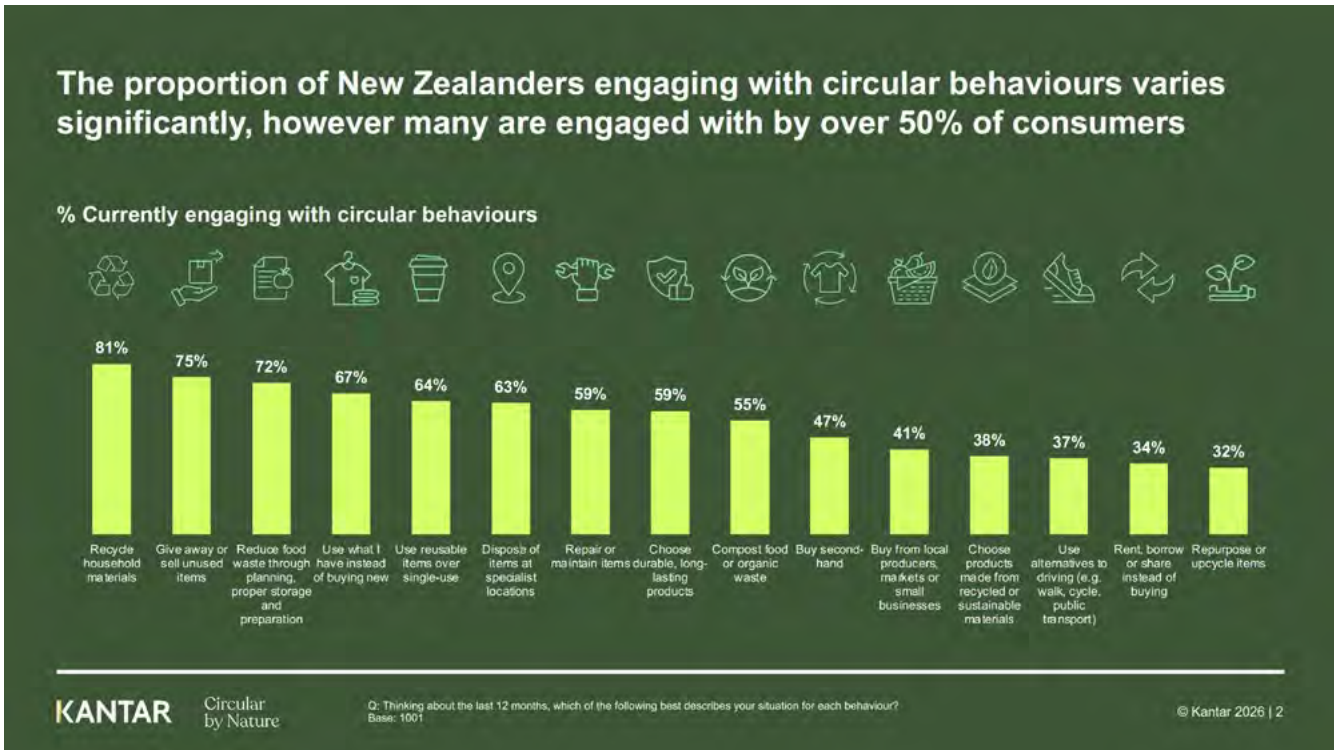
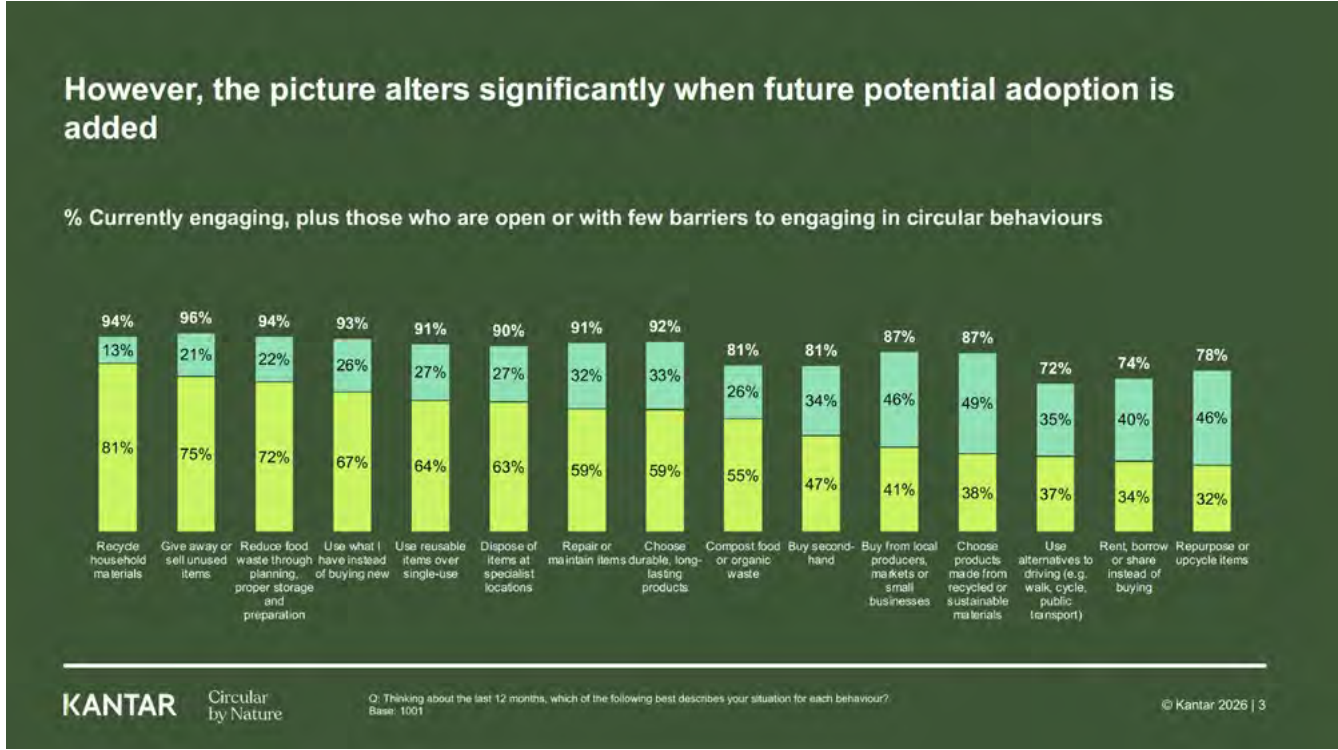
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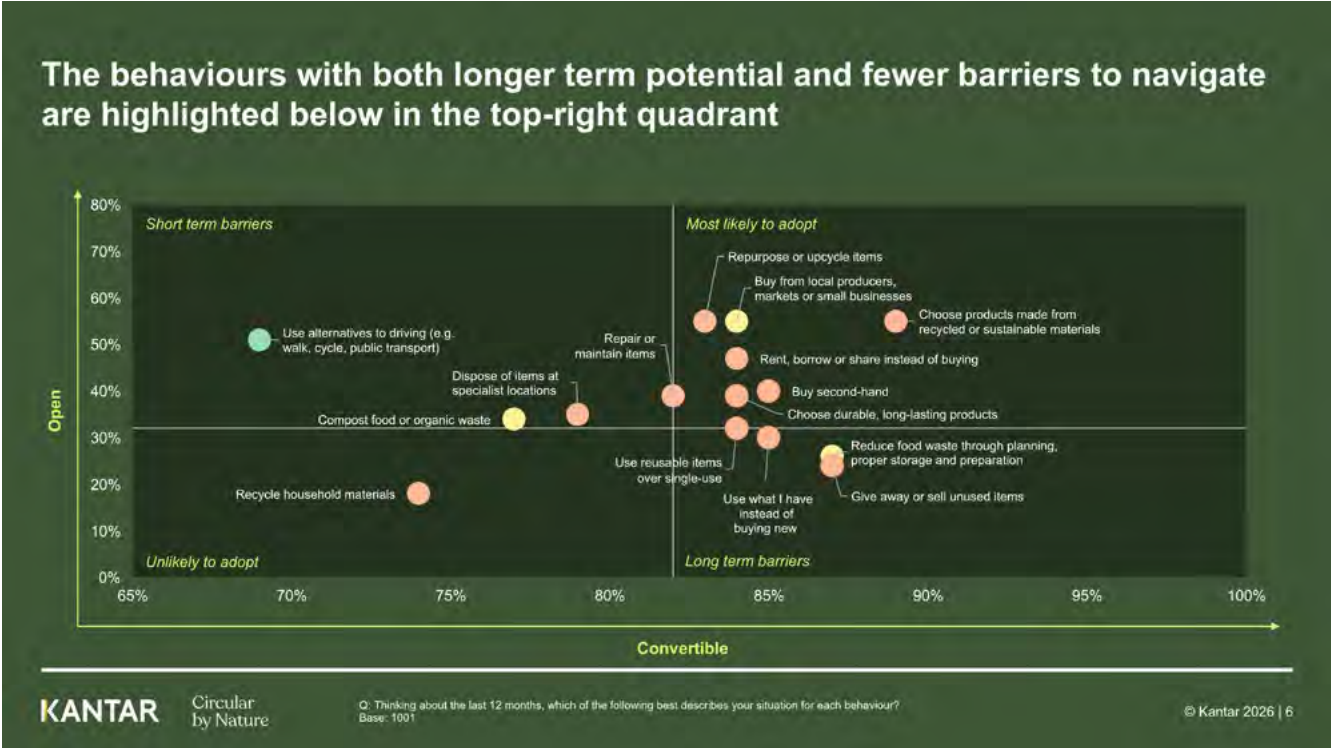
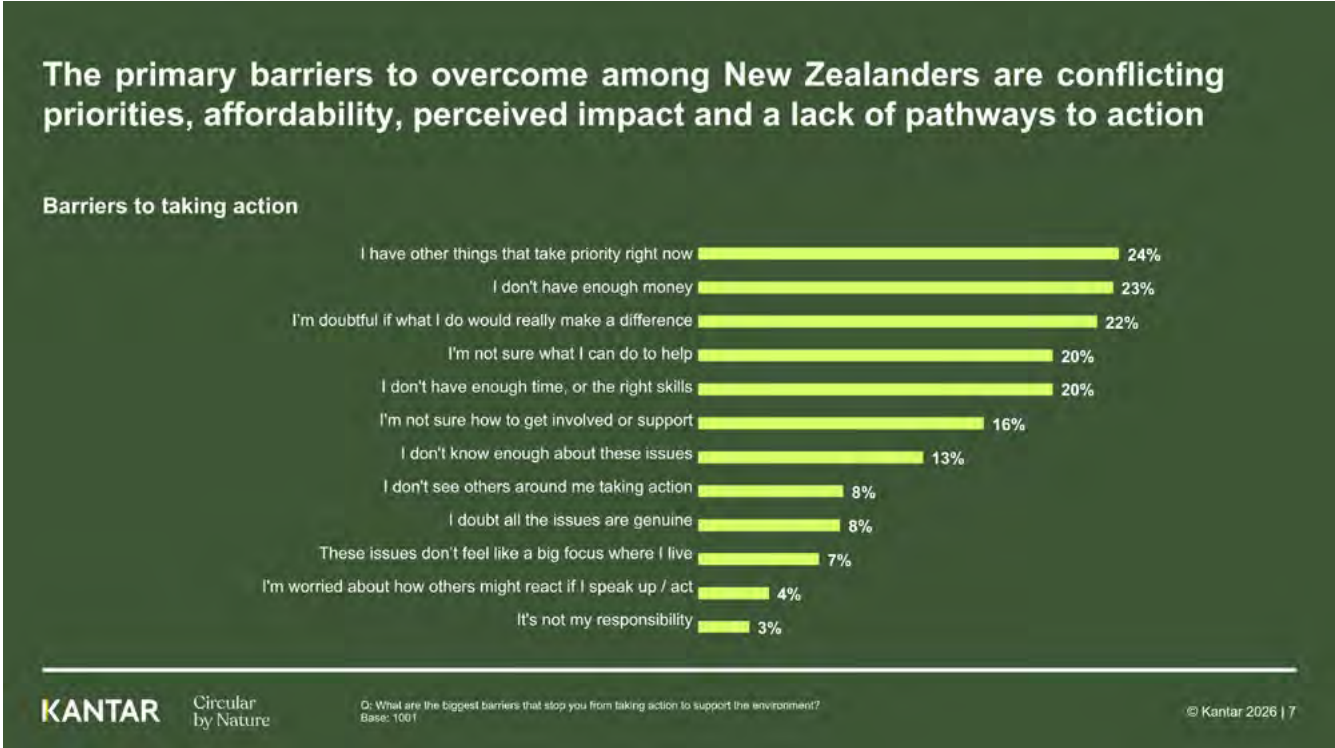
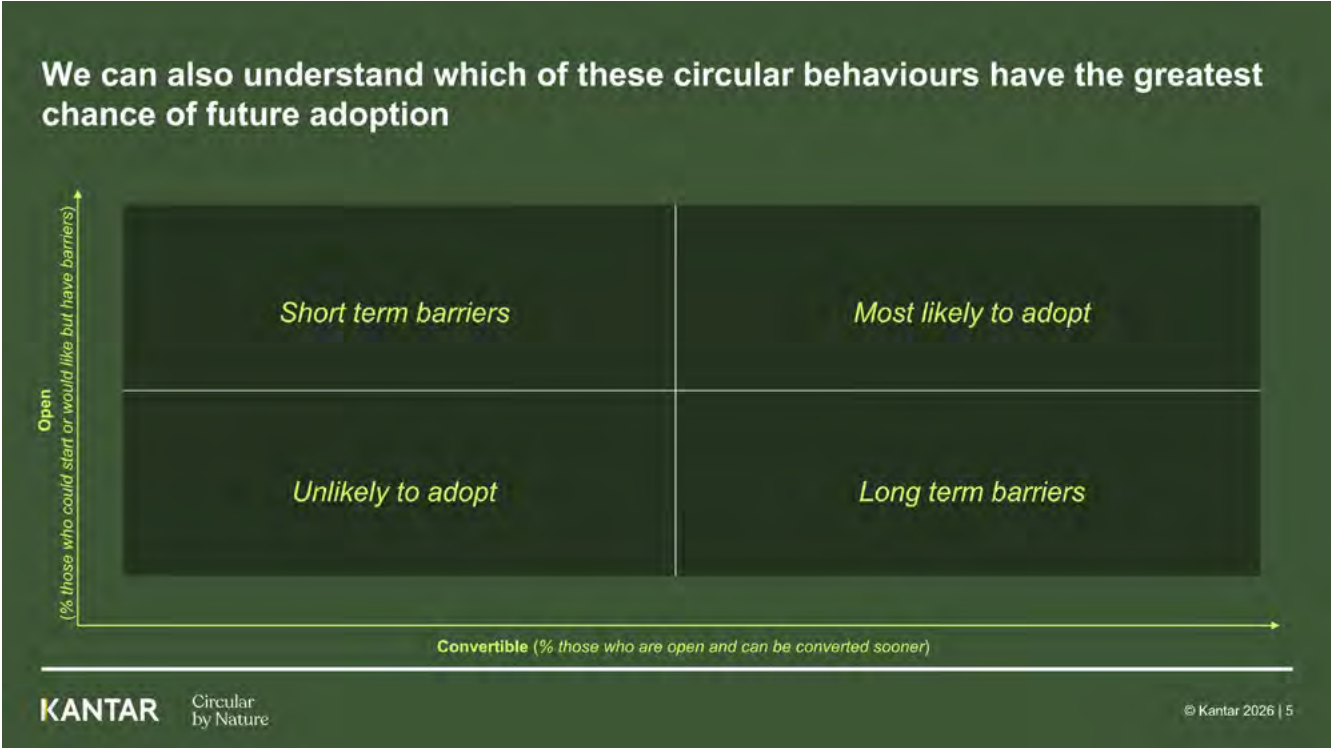
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Appendix A - Circular behaviours in New Zealand

Kantar for Circular by Nature, research conducted May 2026.





Kantar for Circular by Nature, research conducted May 2026.



Key points to takeaway



There is considerable uptake of a range of circular behaviours already and the impact of previous public and private sector actions have clearly made an impact



There is a clear opportunity for greater uptake of circular behaviours, with significant proportions of New Zealanders expressing a desire to increase their adoption. There is also significant upside in broadening current behaviours such as reuse, repurpose and repair across more categories



The new behaviours that can be most successfully extended / activated are...

- Repurposing / upcycling
- Buying from local or smaller businesses
- Choosing products made with recycled or sustainable materials
- Renting, borrowing or sharing
- Buying second-hand
- Choosing durable products



These can be supported by a range of program designs, targeted communications and policy settings...

...alongside some targeting of urban younger families, potentially with a male skew



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Research carried out by Jason Cate and Mikayla Bourne, Kantar NZ in collaboration with Louise Nash, Kelly McClean and Samantha Walsmley-Bartlett, Circular by Nature.

Appendix B – Relevant New Zealand policies, plans and regulations

Instrument	Potential areas of inclusion
Emissions Reduction Plan	Circularity embedded within ERP3. Construction and demolition waste is 69% of levied landfill; farm electrification and nutrient recovery are emissions actions as well as circular ones. The Commission has evidenced a 9.2 MtCO2e gap for 2031–2035 – nearly three times what ERP2 achieved – and waste, critical materials and circularity are absent from its headline recommendations.
Planning Bill & Natural Environment Bill	Material passports and deconstruction planning for major builds; freshwater farm plan provisions supporting nutrient recovery; consenting pathways and incentives for on-farm energy generation.
National Infrastructure Plan/ Strategy	Include circularity explicitly as a long term infrastructure objective. Te Waihanga New Zealand Infrastructure Commission 2022 plan had circular economy objective, 2026 less emphasis but still mentions waste and resource recovery. Strengthen.
Waste Minimisation Act	A legal definition of the circular economy, a zero-waste hierarchy, and the seven legislative strategies Āmiomio identified with international precedent: bans, mandates, targets, economic instruments, design specifications, recovery standards and transparency requirements.
Hazardous Substances Act	The chemicals in packaging, electronics and everyday objects that make products unsafe to recirculate. A circular economy that regenerates nature cannot be built on materials that spread contamination when recovered.
NZ Building Code	Longer building lifespans, sorted construction and demolition waste streams, deconstruction focus, and material passports.
Tax settings	Removal of the advantage given to virgin material extraction with tax incentives for repair, recovery of materials and remanufacturing.

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Our Strategic Partners



Clare foundation provided funding to enable the white paper development, launch and engagement



Kantar undertook consumer research on circular behaviour for the first time in New Zealand, for this platform to share.



University of Auckland - academic and cross-disciplinary CEBUS teams joined our online feedback sessions and will host the report launch on campus for a wide audience.

Our Creative Partners



Hula worked closely with Circular by Nature to bring this kaupapa to life in design. This saw Hula leading creative expression and creating bespoke artworks for the report to help make Aotearoa NZ’s circular future feel immediately more imaginable and accessible. Hula brought together a dedicated team of local specialists to realise the vision in its physical form.

“This is incredibly important and timely work for Aotearoa. We’re proud to be bringing our creative skills, efforts, and hearts to work with Circular by Nature in helping it resonate and connect even more deeply with decision-makers and New Zealanders.” – Josh Daly

Ngā mihi nui to our team and partners for their contribution: Jenna Billman (Design Lead and Artist), Mark Benseman (Creative Director), Tamar Hawkins (Production Design) Josh Daly (Co-GM), and Bree Asmus (Strategy Director).

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Dave Black – Our collaborator and print production specialist who made every detail and dream for the hard copy of this white paper possible.

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Printing specs: A mix of recycled paper and virgin paper stock have been used to produce this document. It is 100% recyclable. However when you are finished with it, we invite you to pass it on or return it to either Circular by Nature or Hula.

Use of AI: No artificial intelligence was used in the design of this document. The photographs are real and the illustrative artworks were completed entirely by human hand and the creative interpretation of our Hula designer and artist, Jenna Billman.

About the authors

Louise Nash is an economist, creator of the *Circular by Design™* methodology, and founder and CEO of Circularity - Aotearoa's leading circular economy design and advisory practice, and a certified B Corp. Over more than 20 years, she has led over 168 circular transformation strategies across packaging, textiles, food, plastics, transport, timber, and water, keeping one million tonnes of New Zealand's resources out of landfill. Her XLabs circular innovation labs have built the capability of nearly 25,000 professionals, from business leaders to community

practitioners. A COP30, Sustainability Leaders, and Economic Development Innovation award recipient, Louise has worked across New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Brazil, Canada, Europe, and Dubai. Her philosophy is simple: work with nature, not against it, and make that work accessible to everyone who wants to be part of it.
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Samantha Walmsley-Bartlett s a systems change leader focused on enabling regeneration across landscapes and value chains - shifting relationships, incentives, and decisions at every level, from grower cooperatives to global shipping routes. As Head of Sustainability at Zespri International, she developed the first industry-wide electrification pathway for kiwifruit and built collaborative models between growers and packhouse businesses. At Circularity, she led New Zealand's first measurement of circular solutions using the Circular Transition Indicator tool, co-developed the XLabs Circular Economy Programme and her 999 Days of Sharing

Circular Solutions connected businesses and communities to over 200 practical circular solutions. She co-founded Fairgrow - addressing food insecurity and waste at community level - and has contributed to Future Whenua and is on the board of Future Farmers, two networks focused on the long-term resilience of New Zealand's land and farming communities. Samantha brings a rare experience of taking the circular economy from strategy to the ground, with the community relationships to prove it.
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Kelly McClean is a strategy, design, and sustainability specialist with over 12 years of experience leading innovation and circular economy projects across textiles, agriculture, manufacturing, FMCG, packaging, and infrastructure. At Aurecon she was a key contributor to MBIE's circular bioeconomy research and engagement programme, focusing on manufacturing, food, the built environment, and digital enablers. As Sustainable Packaging Programme Manager at Foodstuffs NZ she worked internally and externally to support circular systems change in the retail sector. Kelly is also co-founder of social enterprises CommonKind and Reuse Aotearoa, and an active member of the Textiles Advisory Group. She currently leads Future of Fibre Aotearoa, an industry-led enabler

delivered through a Fashion & Textiles New Zealand and AGMARDT partnership. Kelly is also founding trustee and chair of award-winning Ahu Charitable Trust ki Pukerua Bay, which runs 'Pukerua Bay Hub' community events and pop-ups spanning the arts, clothing and crop swaps, planting, kai and repair workshops and local markets. Her work consistently bridges the technical and the human, bringing methodological rigour that gives a document like this its credibility with expert audiences, and the systems design thinking that makes it legible and actionable for businesses, councils, and communities working through the transition on the ground.
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