'We've been on a journey towards circularity for a number of years now and, although we know we have a long way to go, our involvement in the Bega Circular Valley program is a great way for us to experiment with what works (and, just as importantly, what doesn't) before looking to scale it up across the Bega Group as part of our long-term commitment to becoming more circular.'

Rob Grima, Executive General Manager Operational Excellence Bega Group

CASE STUDY: BEGA GROUP (Bega Valley and National)

Focus: An ongoing journey towards circularity.

Background: Bega Group is one of the founding members of the Regional Circularity Co-operative and has been closely involved with the Bega Circular Valley program since it was launched in 2021. In early 2023 they re-affirmed their long-term commitment to the program by providing $5 million in funding and donating land for the National Circularity Centre.

Circular innovation: Circularity has gradually increased in importance over the last four years for the Bega Group and is now one of the three pillars of their 2030 'Greater Good' sustainability strategy. Within the circularity pillar of this strategy is a commitment to improve resource efficiency and reduce emissions.

This focus has led to a range of tangible circularity focused initiatives being implemented across their operations nationally, with some of those that have been brought in at their manufacturing sites in the Bega Valley, for example, including participation in a heat recovery project to optimise energy efficiency onsite, and waste-water irrigation on Bega land and neighbouring dairy farms.

Another example is the upgrade of the boiler used to generate steam in site-wide manufacturing processes to run on wood waste biomass sourced from a local sawmill rather than gas – an initiative that has led to a substantial reduction in gas usage and is a great example of reusing a waste stream.

Impact and future development: Looking ahead, they will continue to explore the substantial opportunities that exist in becoming more circular across the organisation, with short-term projects planned including a logistics optimisation project to improve the overall efficiency of their transport network and exploring the potential to build a 2.6MW solar farm with battery storage next to the Ridge Street manufacturing site in Bega to continue their shift towards more renewable sources of energy.

For more information: www.begagroup.com.au/sustainability/circularity/.