

Asset management’s critical role enabling a circular economy

By Debbie O’Byrne & Alex Bell

The global transition from a linear to a circular economy is firmly underway. There is a clear opportunity for asset management to be widely recognized as a key enabler in materially reducing the impacts of climate change, supply chain disruption, and support regeneration through the deployment of circular economy principles.

Many existing asset management practices focus on a continuous cycle of procuring assets that are utilised to maximize their performance and typically scrapped or recycled at end of life, historically the cheapest and easiest method of disposal.

Circular economy principles eliminate the notion that assets have an ‘end-of-life’. This shift from a linear economy challenges asset managers to adapt different mindsets around performance versus ownership, new value metrics and consideration of new types of businesses and business models. This can include leveraging the rise of intelligent assets, mining data to generate insights and facilitate multiple asset lifecycles, e.g. material passports and digital twins.

This enables moving away from linear asset life cycles into closed-loop systems where fewer new resources are needed, and little waste generated creating a unique opportunity to define and support the management of multiple asset life cycles and harness and unlock additional value streams that the assets enable.

Bios - Debbie O’Byrne and Alex Bell

Debbie has been involved in the Circular Economy (CE) space for almost a decade working on projects related to policy, material & data flows, low-carbon economic development. She currently works at Beca working across multiple sectors to enable a CE transition. She has delivered a CE Masterclass for Green Building Council (GBC), been appointed to MBIE College of Assessors as a CE expert, recently been appointed to the World GBC Circularity Accelerator as the NZ rep and is an Honorary Lecturer at the University of Waikato. She’s a regular speaker at conferences across many CE related topics.

Alex is a civil engineer by trade, structural engineer by experience and a passionate environmentalist. For him, engineering is solving problems for the benefit of our communities and environment. He chose Engineering to live out this definition and repay the communities and environment that raised him. He prides himself on his perseverance, diligence and punctuality; skills developed through a New Zealand farming background and a determination for academic merit.