

Published: 9 July 2012

Tip shops and recycling centres are community hubs

Australia's Community Recycling Enterprises (CREs) divert 152,000 tonnes of waste each year, employ 1500 people and contribute over \$56 million to the regional economy, according to a Queensland University of Technology (QUT) study.



Credit: Reverse Art Truck

CREs are typically owned and operated by nonprofit organisations, community groups, and local governments, and are often run as joint ventures. Through the operation of tip shops and recycling centres, CREs divert resources from landfill. One long standing example is Reverse Garbage in Sydney's Marrickville. In addition to selling secondhand items, it sources offcuts and remnants from manufacturing enterprises – which would otherwise go to landfill – and sells them as art and craft materials.

A recently released [report](#) by QUT's Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies, summarises a study of the activities of 28 CREs in all states.

The study found that among the benefits of CREs are job creation, particularly for disadvantaged job-seekers, and the capacity to foster civic engagement by operating as important hubs for community interactions.

According to the report, recycling and reuse of unwanted product can be sustained by sales rather than by government handouts.

The study also showed that CREs provide leadership in domestic and commercial resource recovery, modelling new methods of operation that are often adopted more widely. While environmental benefits flow from CREs, the study authors found that from the point of view of the organisations that have started these enterprises, what has driven their development as been job creation.

Among the case studies highlighted in the report are The Endeavour Recycle Shop in Morgan Park, Queensland, which employs people with disabilities, and the award winning Great Lakes Resource Recovery centre in Tuncurry, New South Wales.

The report was sponsored by Social Traders, Sustainability Victoria and the New South Wales Department of Premier & Cabinet. The

study was led by Associate Professor Jo Barraket of QUT's Business School.

Source: Community Recycling Network Australia

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC12349>