



## 2014 End of Year Report



## Executive Summary

Community Reuse Network Ireland (CRNI) is an all-Ireland umbrella body that represents community-based organisations involved in reuse. CRNI is kindly funded by the EPA and is the national body for reuse with a broad stakeholder base including grassroots reuse organisations, the wider environmental and social enterprise sectors, policy makers, government officials and the general public. CRNI sits on a number of bodies including the National Waste Prevention Committee (NWPC), the Social Enterprise Task Force (SEETF), Eco-tourism Ireland and the European-wide reuse network (RREUSE).

The aims of the network are set out in its current 5-year strategy as:

- Promotion of reuse
- Support for members
- Communication – internal and external
- Membership drive
- Policy input
- Research (including market research)
- Networking and Links (including European links)

The majority of CRNI's members are social enterprises and the network members provide substantial benefits in both environmental and socio-economic terms.

<b>Environmental benefits</b>	<b>Socio-economic benefits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• waste prevention</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• job creation for disadvantaged areas and marginalised people</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• diversion of valuable materials from landfill</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• employment training and skills training</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• resource efficiency</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the provision of quality essentials at affordable prices</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• educational value of promoting reuse to a wider public</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• boosting local economies</li></ul>

2014 has been an important year for CRNI when much of the hard work put into the group since its inception in 2010 paid off and the network was rewarded with a more prominent profile and cemented its role as a key stakeholder in the Irish environmental sector.

CRNI completed two exciting Green Business projects funded under the EPA Strive Programme in 2014; the Reuse It! smartphone app and the Revival by CRNI pop-up shop and educational space. The Reuse It! smartphone app allows users to find the appropriate service to reuse particular items (furniture, WEEE and so on) in their own geographical areas. It also contains short instructional videos of simple reuse, or make-mend-and-do, skills. The Revival by CRNI pop-up shop showcased and marketed reused products made by CRNI members in a stylish, city centre retail space with the intention of bringing reuse to a broad audience. It promoted the idea of quality and creativity in reuse. Workshops on a wide variety of reuse skills, methods and ideas to inspire and encourage thinking in a new way about reusing, rather than junking, items. The pop-up shop garnered CRNI a good deal of PR through both traditional and social media.

2014 also saw CRNI organise a reuse conference which was well attended and well received by a broad sector of participants from public, private and civil sectors. The conference featured speakers from Ireland, the UK and Europe and looked at both practical and policy aspects of reuse and was held at Farmleigh house in the Phoenix Park. A video of the conference was produced as a promotional video for CRNI, to extend the impact and value of the conference. Discussions on the day proved to be robust and insightful and the event resulted in a lot of interest from all over the country.

There is a wealth of collective expertise and experience in reuse within the network and so CRNI takes its role as a key stakeholder in policy discussion around waste prevention and circular economy very seriously. This year CRNI was delighted to take its place on the National Waste Prevention Committee (NWPC). In addition, CRNI took an active part in discussions and consultations on the new Regional Waste Management Plans (RWMPs). Submissions made by CRNI to the RWMP process were the product of much consultation within the network transferring the knowledge of those working on the ground in reuse as well as drawing from reuse discourses happening in Europe.

Networking and creating links is an essential part of the work of CRNI and the network was represented at many events during 2014, by both the network coordinator and by individual members. Some of the more high profile events at which CRNI members presented, exhibited or attended included the Irish Social Enterprise Conference (10<sup>th</sup> February), the CIWM Resource Efficiency Event (26<sup>th</sup> February), the EU Commission Green Week conference in the Egg conference centre in Brussels (3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June) and the Irish Wastes Management Conference (IWMC) in Carton House, Maynooth, (25<sup>th</sup> November). CRNI also attended a two meetings of the European reuse network, RREUSE, in mainland Europe. Presentations on reuse and the work of the network were given to the Conference of Irish Geographers, the Local Authority Planning Network (LAPN) and textile students in the National College of Art and Design (NCAD).

## Community Reuse Network Ireland

The Community Reuse Network Ireland (CRNI) is the all-Ireland representative body for community based reuse and waste prevention organisations. Since its inception in 2010, the organisation has supported its members and encouraged growth in the sector. With funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, CRNI has grown significantly in terms of full and associate members, fostered close links with EU and UK reuse networks, organised reuse conferences and participated in a myriad of reuse and related events and conferences.



CRNI has dual mandate with both environmental and socio-economic considerations within its remit. CRNI's environmental activities include the promotion of creative reuse where pre-loved items are up-cycled, re-designed and prepared to be reused. On a daily basis, the network members work to divert used items from landfill and to foster more sustainable use of resources. As CRNI works primarily with social enterprise organisations, a key function of the network is to communicate the importance of the reuse sector in creating employment within a community and its role in providing training and work skills. CRNI members help to prevent the marginalisation of unemployed people and so enhance the wellbeing of both individuals and communities.

As CRNI is the only reuse network operating within Ireland, it has, along with its members, the potential to play a unique and valuable role in the development of resource efficiency and circular economy initiatives at both local and national levels. The growing importance of the reuse concept at both societal and political levels, offers exciting opportunities that CRNI intends to capitalise on in the next five years. The wealth of experience and the broad range of reuse expertise encompassed within the network, together with the links that CRNI has developed internationally through its involvement in the European RREUSE network, means that CRNI has the capacity to be a useful stakeholder in policy discussions and decisions in environment, enterprise and social protection areas. CRNI is in an excellent position to conduct research about reuse issues within the Irish context, both on its own and within collaborative research partnerships.

This document offers some background on CRNI and summarises the network's highlight activities in 2014 before setting out the work plan for 2015. This work plan is formulated in conjunction with the CRNI Board and is based on the current CRNI five year strategy (2014 -2018 inclusive) which envisages CRNI as a significant and influential stakeholder in resource efficiency, waste management and job creation discussions in Ireland.



**Social Benefits:**

- employment
- staff training and 'upskilling' opportunities
- low-cost purchase option for low-income households for items such as furniture, clothing, computers, etc.
- employment progression opportunities for the long-term unemployed/ individuals at high risk of unemployment
- help to build the self-esteem and work environment confidence of individuals employed and trained by member projects



**Economic Benefits:**

- job creation, with a particular emphasis on employment for people who are socially excluded
- fostering sustainable , long-term businesses
- injecting revenue into the local economy
- generating economic activity in deprived communities
- attracting other trade and related spin-offs
- maintaining an 'Ireland' focus, in terms of 'made/ repaired in Ireland'



**Environmental Benefits:**

- reduction in the volume of waste generated
- increased volume of material reused
- reduced carbon emissions
- help to generate positive behavioural change in the community, e.g. by increasing awareness of waste as a resource

**Benefits of CRNI membership**

CRNI members are actively involved in gathering, preparing, exchanging or selling reusable items. A wide range of reuse items and processes are represented within the membership of the network including the reuse of textiles, furniture, WEEE, paint, art materials, mattresses and bicycles. In addition, CRNI members such as exchange Free Trade Ireland, SMILE Resource Exchange and the Irish Charity Shop Association (ICSA) facilitate the reuse of a broad range of items between businesses and individuals.



The CRNI vision, aims and objectives have been constructed in conjunction with the CRNI members, so that all the labours of the network board and executive are directed towards both the overarching mission of the reuse sector and also the needs of the members as individual organisations.

### **The CRNI vision**

An Ireland where the word 'Waste' doesn't exist and where our entire community benefits from the social, environmental and economic value of all reusable resources.

The core strategy areas set out in the CRNI strategy plan are as follows:

- Promotion of reuse
- Support for members
- Communication
- Membership drive
- Policy input
- Research (including market research)
- Networking and Links (including European links)

Membership of the network is helpful to the various member organisations in a number of ways. CRNI is an important conduit between policy makers and reuse practitioners. As a member of the National Waste Prevention Committee (NWPC), the Social Enterprise Taskforce (SEETF) and the European Reuse Network (RREUSE), CRNI has a number of ways it can feed into policy at national and European levels. In addition, CRNI is committed to making submissions on policy and legislation relevant to the network members. This includes policy affecting waste management, resource efficiency, social inclusion and social enterprise.

CRNI members have access to best reuse practice, as well as the latest news and developments, via the links CRNI has forged with international reuse networks. Members can share capacity in many skills areas including communication, retail, running a business and so on. In addition, the ethos of the network that of openness and co-operation and the resultant sharing of information, knowledge and experience is cited by current members as an extremely useful and attractive attribute of CRN membership.

CRNI has an important role in facilitating communication internally between members and also in communicating the message about reuse externally to all stakeholders including policy makers, business, community groups, educators, potential members and the general public. Such communication is multi-faceted employing a range of channels including traditional and social media, the CRNI newsletter and network meetings. In addition, communication and the promotion of reuse are key aspects of important network activities such as our CRNI conferences, presentations to diverse groups, stands at various events. CRNI members also take part in and benefit from network-led Green Enterprise projects such as the Revival pop-up shop and the Reuse It! smartphone application both completed in 2014.



CRNI is now a member of The Wheel, and there are a number of ways the Network gets the benefit of this. The coordinator is committed to passing all of the information from briefings and training courses, so that CRNI members can benefit directly from this membership.

## The value of reuse: Economic, Environmental and Social – Snapshots from the Network 2014

### Revamp Furniture Recycling, Longford



In 2014, *Revamp 3R, Longford* achieved the following:

- **Diverted 35,718kg** furniture from landfill
- Received **1,022 donated items**
- Made **900+ sales**
- Employed and trained **18 people**
- In 2015 the Revamp 3R 7,000 sq. ft. furniture store and restoration unit will celebrate its **10th Anniversary** 😊

### Free Trade Ireland, online

In 2014, *Free Trade Ireland* achieved the following:

- **Diverted 16,740 items (188,814kg)** from landfill
- Helped FreeTrade Ireland users to **save €2,051,763**
- Had **617,635 visits** to the FreeTrade Ireland website
- Had **228,730 individual users**
- Had **3,254 new users** sign up



## The Rediscovery Centre, Dublin



In 2014, *The Rediscovery Centre* achieved the following:

- Diverted **17,000kg** of materials
- Employed and/or trained **46 people** (<10% returned to live register following training)
- Had **5777 children** take part in RDC environmental education workshops
- Launched and piloted a new 5 day **sustainability training course** (FETEC Level 9)

## Sunflower Recycling/Busy Bees Furniture Recycling, Dublin

In 2014 *Sunflower Recycling /Busy Bees Furniture Recycling* achieved the following:

- Diverted **27,818 kg** of furniture from landfill
- Diverted **139.64 tonnes** of paper from landfill
- Diverted **37.95 tonnes** of cardboard from landfill
- Diverted **1.27 tonnes** of plastic from landfill
- Trained **39 people**, so far this year **18 of these have progressed** to employment or further training



## Revamp, Co. Kerry (North East Kerry Development - NEKD)

In 2014 *Revamp, Co. Kerry* achieved the following

- Employed a total of **18 people**
- Of these employees, **8 are from the Traveller Community**



## CRNI in 2014

2014 was an important year in the development of CRNI. It is clear that the hard work building the network in the early years of its life is beginning to pay dividends and the impact and significance of CRNI on the resource efficiency landscape in Ireland is starting to grow. This is occurring against a backdrop where the importance of resource efficiency and circular economy is taking centre stage both internationally and nationally. CRNI is an important stakeholder in Ireland's resource efficiency strategy and is poised to be an important asset in this regard.



### *Organisational changes*

2014 saw a significant increase in CRNI funding from the EPA. CRNI is very grateful for this funding and the increase has allowed the network to do a number of important events and activities that were hugely beneficial in meeting our core objectives. For example, CRNI ran a slick and professional conference in order to reach out, promote reuse to and discuss reuse with a diverse audience. We produced a pop-vox video to show at the conference and also a promotional video based on the conference. The conference was free to attend and attracted a wide range of salient people and organisations. CRNI also presented a stand at Green Week in Brussels. The increase in funding also allowed the co-ordinator to visit members based outside Dublin in order to consolidate the membership.

At the end of 2013, CRNI gained charitable status. In 2014, CRNI explored ways to best use this status. The Network is now a member of The Wheel. This association has allowed CRNI to avail of a range of training opportunities and advice for the charity and not-for-profit sector.

### *Policy role of CRNI*

During 2014, CRNI took significant steps to develop its role in policy. Early in the year, CRNI had a very productive meeting with the then Minister with responsibility for Social Enterprise, Sean Sherlock, TD at his office in the Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation. The CRNI co-ordinator now sits on the Social Enterprise Taskforce and attends of that body, feeding into policy. In addition, CRNI has been actively involved in discussions around the new Regional Waste Management Plans (WMP) throughout the year. This involved making submissions, meeting with those preparing the plans and taking part in briefing sessions on the WMPs. Most significantly, CRNI was appointed on to the National Waste Prevention Committee (NWPC) and the CRNI coordinator attended her first meeting of this body on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2014. CRNI is looking forward to contributing to and feeding into policy discussions on that body.

### **Green Enterprise Projects**

This year CRNI completed two EPA Green Business projects – *Reuse It!* by CRNI, a smartphone application to help users find local reuse service providers and, *Revival* by CRNI, an exciting city centre pop-up retail and educational project. Both projects were very successful and engaged the public in very different ways, doing much to promote the concept of reuse, the CRNI network and the individual members. The pop-up shop project was a good communication and promotional opportunity for the network as a whole and for the individual members. It also entailed some basic market research about attitudes to reuse in Ireland. Both of these projects have reached out to a general and very mixed audience to promote reuse. The promotion of the app is ongoing through social media, at events and conferences and we are talking to EAOs and similar to help publicise the app and to encourage people to download it. The launch for the app took place at the CRNI reuse conference in Farmleigh House (see below). CRNI submitted a proposal to the EPA Green Enterprise call and we were successful in securing funding for a project to begin in February 2015.



### **The CRNI conference**



One of the main events of the year for CRNI, was our conference held in Farmleigh House. It was very successful, attracted a broad range of attendees (<100 attendees) and consisted of seven extremely informative and interesting speakers and two lively Q&A sessions. The conference hit a number of the CRNI key objectives. It helped to promote reuse by raising the profile of the organisation among a very diverse attendance group. The conference supported CRNI members by helping them connect with each other and with a broad range of organisations and individuals involved or interested in the reuse sector.

## Communication



Communication is an important part of the CRNI work programme each year. This includes both external and internal communication. Media lists have been drawn up and during the year press releases were prepared in relation to the Green Enterprise projects and the CRNI conference. CRNI achieved a good deal of print and online media exposure for the pop-up shop. In addition to traditional media, CRNI also utilised social media to good effect in 2014 with Facebook and Twitter accounts for both CRNI and for the Revival by CRNI pop-up shop. The network achieved a good deal of interaction on both of these social media channels.

The final quarter of 2014 saw a new CRNI quarterly e-Newsletter being produced. The newsletter is designed to connect the members with each other as well as to inform them of reuse-related developments nationally and in the EU. The intended audience is CRNI members and other interested parties. In addition, CRNI took out a subscription and advertising package with Enviro-solutions e-zine. This has done much to raise the profile of the organisation and was instrumental in publicising the conference.

## CRNI participation at events 2014

Presentations were given to the LAPN about the work of CRNI and to the Conference of Irish Geographers (May). In addition a talk was given to textile students in the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) about the importance of reuse and eco-design (April).



CRNI was represented at a number broad range of events in 2015. CRNI had stands at CIWM Resource Efficiency Event (26<sup>th</sup> February), a SMILE event, Tallaght, (3<sup>rd</sup> April) and at the Irish Wastes Management Conference (IWMC) in Carton House, Maynooth, (25<sup>th</sup> November). CRNI successfully submitted a proposal to have a stand at the EU Commission Green Week conference in the Egg conference centre in Brussels (3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June). The competition for stands at this event is tough and it was an achievement to get selected.

CRNI also attended the Irish Social Enterprise Conference (10<sup>th</sup> February), official launch of ReCreate Ireland (14<sup>th</sup> February), Waste Planning Briefing and Consultation Session, Mullingar (9<sup>th</sup> April) WEEE Ireland seminar, Dublin, (26<sup>th</sup> May) the STEM Green Business Conference in Newry (2<sup>nd</sup> October) the EPA climate change lecture, Mansion House (6<sup>th</sup> October) Recosi Conference in Dun Laoghaire (30<sup>th</sup> October), Be Green/Green Business Seminar, Dublin (18<sup>th</sup> November), the SMILE National Launch (27<sup>th</sup> November) and the Forum on Food Waste, Smock Alley, Dublin (11<sup>th</sup> December).

## Membership

CRNI has focused on consolidating current membership and seeking new members to recruit this year. Upside Design - a local furniture upcycling company based in Dalkey, Revamp - a community furniture

upcycling social enterprise in Co. Kerry and the Boomerang Mattress Recycling project based in Cork all joined the Network this year.

The pop-up store project has resulted in invigorating current members. CRNI has also had discussions with a number of other organisations with a view to recruiting them to the organisation. The Network also actively explored new areas of interaction such as food waste prevention and the emerging repair café movement.

### **Networking**

Networking both in the domestic and European arenas has always been an important part of CRNI activities and 2014 gave CRNI many opportunities to do this.

On a European level, CRNI attended two RREUSE meetings this year (March and July) and (LoWaste) conference in early March in Brussels where policy and practicalities in relation to the circular economy and reuse were discussed. RREUSE membership allows CRNI to feed into policy discussions at European level. It allows us insights to current practice and research around reuse happening in Europe.



CRNI was appointed to the board of RREUSE this year, this gives CRNI a say in the direction and the priorities of the RREUSE organisation.

On a national policy level, CRNI was invited to be part of the National Waste Prevention Committee. This is an important body in waste policy terms and it is a wonderful opportunity for CRNI to be part of that committee. We believe we have a lot of expertise to bring to that committee.

The CRNI conference allowed the organisation to forge new connections and build a wider network for reuse.

## Summary of CRNI activities 2014

The following table summarises progress made in relation to specific 2014 work plan objectives.

Objective	Progress for 2014
<b>Promotion of reuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed pop-up shop project</li> <li>• Completed the smartphone app project</li> <li>• Produced marketing materials for the pop-up shop and the smartphone app project</li> <li>• A vox-pop video was prepared to look at understandings of reuse among the public</li> <li>• A promotional video was made at the CRNI conference</li> <li>• Organised a conference during European Waste Reduction Week (EWRW)</li> <li>• Linking in with a research project which is developing reuse indicators for Ireland</li> </ul>
<b>Support for members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Board meetings, one Board AGM and an EGM were held during 2014</li> <li>• 7 Network meetings were held during 2014</li> <li>• Work on a 5 year strategy began in Q1 with a SWOT analysis early in the year. A draft strategy document was prepared and working group set up to progress it further.</li> <li>• A members contact list was produced and circulated</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media lists have been drawn up in the context of the pop-up shop</li> <li>• A successful CRNI conference was held in Farmleigh House which attracted a broad audience</li> <li>• Press releases were prepared sent to local Dublin and national print and broadcast media in relation to the pop-up shop, the CRNI conference and the smartphone app launch</li> <li>• Coverage achieved in Irish Times, Metro, Dublin Informer, Dublin Gazette, Her.ie (online e-zine)</li> <li>• Social media accounts for both CRNI and for the Revival pop-up shop are doing very well and are receiving a lot of interaction (facebook and twitter)</li> <li>• A quarterly e-newsletter was begun in Autumn 2014</li> <li>• Made presentations to LAPN, Conference of Irish Geographers and to NCAD design students</li> <li>• Had stands at 4 events during the year</li> <li>• Attended a wide range of events during the year</li> </ul>
<b>Membership drive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected and met with existing members</li> <li>• Reconnected with NI members</li> <li>• Recruited 3 new members in 2014</li> <li>• Discussed possible LA membership with EAO at LAPN meeting</li> <li>• Membership criteria document in the process of being prepared</li> </ul>
<b>Policy Input</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Made submissions to the 3 RWMP in late December 2013</li> <li>• Met with Minister Sean Sherlock January 2014</li> <li>• Secured a place on the Social Enterprise Task Force and attended meetings</li> <li>• Attended the Waste policy briefing and consultation in Mullingar in April</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on the RWMPs at the CRNI conference and a Q&amp;A session</li> <li>• Attended National Waste Prevention Committee (NWPC) meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted market research on understandings of reuse and behaviour on reuse in Ireland as part of the pop-up shop</li> <li>• Successfully submitted a project proposal to the EPA Green Enterprise call</li> <li>• Put forward a title for an undergrad dissertation on attitudes to reuse in Ireland (TCD) (this is a cost free research project for CRNI)</li> <li>• In discussions with DCU about the possibility of having a PhD conducted on communication about reuse in Ireland (this is a cost free research project for CRNI)</li> </ul>
<b>Networking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visits in Cork to Rehab eco village and to Boomerang mattress reuse facility</li> <li>• Site visit to Voluntary Services Lisburn</li> <li>• Invited to sit on the Eco Tourism Ireland Steering Committee</li> <li>• Became a member of the board of RREUSE</li> <li>• Worked to strengthen links with other RREUSE members and other reuse organisations (invited RREUSE, Cite Verde and Zero Waste Scotland to speak at conference)</li> </ul>