

# DEALS COLONY

Circular Innovation Network

## Member Handbook

Read this before your strategy call.

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### **A note before you read**

This handbook is not a legal document. It's a thinking tool — designed to help you understand what Deals Colony is building, why it exists, and how your project fits into something much bigger than a membership. Read it in your own time, at your own pace, before your strategy call with Monika. You don't need to memorise it. You just need to feel it.

# 1. Where this all began

In May 2014, Monika K started a one-day school fundraiser store in Brisbane. No formal business background. No startup capital. Just a question:

***“What if we could earn doing what we love, from anywhere, while still living the life we want?”***

That question became a decade of real experiments. From rescuing closing retail brands and diverting surplus stock — turning broken and leftover products into new creations with local makers, artists, and NDIS organisations — to launching Happy Hobby Hour, a workshop series where all sorts of people came together to learn, share, and build confidence.

One workshop turned into an online course. The course became a framework. The framework got applied to her son’s social enterprise, Happy Hobby Hour Junior (HHHJ) — a registered social enterprise that raised over \$11,000, donated \$5,000 to the Children’s Hospital Foundation, and reached four countries without a single paid ad.

Each initiative fed the next. Each project created a new product idea. Each end point became a new starting point. That circular pattern is not accidental. It is the model.

## **The real reason this network exists**

Monika had to resign from her professional career due to family priorities. During that time, she realised the world needed a place where people could innovate in their spare time — without sacrificing their wellbeing, income, or identity. That personal experience is the why behind everything you are about to read.

After 10+ years, 1,000+ projects across 40+ niches, and four distinct impact portfolios, one pattern kept repeating:

- People had real ideas but no structure to build them
- They had skills but no platform to repurpose them
- They had time — just not the usual kind of time
- And they were afraid — not of failure, but of failing publicly

So Monika built the Trial Project Framework: lightweight, step-by-step, just 2 hours a week. And the Brain-Dump Framework: a tool to organise ideas, frustrations, roadblocks, and aspirations, then pick the most viable one.

Those frameworks are the foundation of what you have just joined.

## 2. What Deals Colony actually is

Deals Colony is not a coaching business. It is not a course platform. It is not a mastermind group.

It is a circular venture operating system — built over a decade of real pilots, real projects, and real impact data — that is now being opened up so others can build ventures using the same infrastructure.

The Amazon comparison is deliberate: Amazon started in retail, built logistics infrastructure out of necessity, then opened that infrastructure to others as Amazon Web Services. Deals Colony started in circular retail, built a venture-building framework out of necessity, and is now offering that framework — and all its shared resources — to the network.

You are not just buying a membership. You are joining the infrastructure.

### The four impact portfolios

Every initiative Deals Colony has ever run falls into one of four portfolios. Together they form a complete circular system:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Circular Retail &amp; Wholesale Innovation</b> | Rescuing closing brands, diverting surplus, creating upcycled products, corporate gift kits, packaging with NDIS partners, and circular retail models.                        |
| <b>Digital Inclusion &amp; Wellbeing</b>          | Community digital mentoring, Happy Hobby Hour workshops, online courses, and confidence-building programs for people rebuilding their identity and career.                    |
| <b>Youth Innovation</b>                           | Happy Hobby Hour Junior (HHHJ) — turning screen time into skill time. K–12 + university programs. \$5,000+ donated to hospitals and charities. 4 countries, 50+ partnerships. |
| <b>Mentorship &amp; Startup Support</b>           | 1,000+ launches supported across eBay, social media, community programs, arts, crafts, ecommerce, freelance services, and circular product ideas.                             |

### 3. How the network is structured

The Circular Innovation Network is designed around three types of members. Together, they form a complete circular system — each group feeding value to the others, and none of them wasting resources.

#### Circle 1: Founding members

Professionals, investors, and founder-led business owners who co-build ventures with Deals Colony over two years. You bring your idea, your expertise, and 2 hours a week. Deals Colony brings the framework, the shared marketing infrastructure, the network, and the project management structure.

As a founding member, you don't build alone. You build collaboratively — and in doing so, you become part of the Deals Colony supply chain, positioned to co-deliver larger procurement contracts with government and corporate clients.

- 2-year membership including 2 co-built pilot projects
- 6-week circular economy strategy sprint
- 5 ESG-aligned impact blogs and digital spotlights
- Regenerative venture portfolio blueprint
- Marketing Funnel-as-a-Service - Plug In & Start Selling With Deals Colony
- Preferred supplier status in year 2

#### Circle 2: Flex / passion-led contributors

Mums returning to work. Retirees with decades of expertise. Students testing career directions. Migrants building local credibility. People who want meaningful side income, experience, or a first step back into work — without the risk of building a full business.

These contributors buy into a defined trial project at a discounted price. The project is fully designed by Deals Colony — scoped, structured, and ready to deliver. They test the water. If it resonates, they move forward. If not, they've lost nothing and gained real experience.

When the network needs work delivered, Deals Colony creates new projects as separate work orders. Contributors get paid. The network gets delivered. Impact data gets generated. Everyone wins.

##### Why this group matters so much

This is the group Monika built the whole model to serve. The revenue from founding members and network organisations funds the infrastructure that creates these opportunities. Every founding member project we build together creates more pathways for people who need them most.

#### Circle 3: Network organisations

Professional services, banks, corporates, hospitals, social enterprises, councils, and community groups who join the network for spotlight, storytelling, ESG impact data, and

community visibility. They contribute connections, credibility, and procurement opportunities. In return, they get measurable ESG and CSR data they can use in their own reporting.

This is where the larger contracts come from — and why building your venture inside this network opens doors that solo entrepreneurship never could.

## 4. How we build together — the project model

Everything at Deals Colony is project-based. Not sessions, not modules, not deliverables. Projects.

A project has a scope, a timeline, a role for each collaborator, and a measurable outcome. This is how Deals Colony has built 1,000+ initiatives across 40+ niches — not by talking about ideas, but by running structured pilots that generate real data, real products, and real proof.

The model that powers every project is the Trial Project Framework:

### The Trial Project Framework

Idea → Brain-Dump → Venture Blueprint → Zero-Waste Design → Pilot Project → Proof of Concept (POC) → Minimum Viable Product (MVP) → First Sale Each stage is designed to be completed in the gaps of a busy life. The whole journey runs approximately 2 hours per week.

### Why repurposing is the point

You are not starting from scratch. One of the most powerful things about joining this network is that you get to repurpose Deals Colony's existing work — frameworks, templates, marketing funnels, impact data, collaborative offers, blog structures, and project blueprints that have already been tested across real initiatives.

This is what 'zero waste' means in practice. Not just materials. Skills, stories, time, and resources are all part of the circular design.

When you read the ESG section later in this handbook, you'll see that repurposing shared resources is one of the most significant ways you can reduce your Scope 3 emissions — while also saving tens of thousands of dollars in trial and error.

### The theory of change

Deals Colony officially became a registered social enterprise in 2024 and adopted the Theory of Change as its measurement framework. Every project is designed to answer:

- What inputs are we using (time, skills, resources)?
- What activities are we running (projects, pilots, workshops)?
- What outputs do we produce (products, reports, content, connections)?
- What outcomes do we create (income, confidence, ESG data, community value)?
- What is the long-term impact (reduced waste, procurement opportunities, new career pathways)?

Your project will be mapped against this framework. It is not bureaucracy. It is how we prove to government and corporate clients that what we build together is worth funding at scale.

## 5. What circular venture building means

A traditional business wastes. It duplicates infrastructure, discards outdated resources, and throws away knowledge when people leave. A circular venture is designed differently from the start.

In a circular venture:

- Every project output becomes an input to the next project
- Every skill developed gets repurposed rather than discarded
- Every resource — time, money, story, relationship — stays in the system
- Waste at the end of one cycle becomes value at the start of the next

This is not a metaphor. It is the literal design of how Deals Colony works. The Happy Hobby Hour workshops became an online course. The course became a framework. The framework became HHHJ. HHHJ became a social enterprise. The social enterprise became a supply chain partner. And now all of that is being repurposed to build your venture.

When you join, you are not adding a new cost centre. You are adding a new loop in the circle.

### What this means for your project

Rather than building your idea from zero, we start by mapping what already exists — in Deals Colony's portfolio, in your own skills and experience, and in the network — and we design your project to repurpose as much as possible before creating anything new.

This saves time. It saves money. It reduces waste. And it generates better impact data, because the circular design is measurable from day one.

## 6. ESG, impact measurement, and why it matters for you

You do not need to be an ESG expert. But you do need to understand what we are building toward and why your project's data matters.

### The opportunity right now

Australia's mandatory sustainability reporting standards (AASB S1 and S2, aligned with the international ISSB framework) came into effect on 1 January 2025. Large companies are scrambling to get their supply chain data in order. Medium-sized businesses are next.

This means that every organisation you might one day supply to — a council, a hospital network, a corporate, a government agency — will soon need to report on the sustainability of their supply chain. Your project, built inside this network, will generate exactly the kind of impact data they need.

That is the procurement opportunity. And it is why we build with measurement in mind from day one.

### The three scopes — simply explained

You will hear about Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions throughout your membership. Here is what they mean in plain language for the kind of projects we build:

| Scope          | What it means   | For your project, think about...   |
|----------------|---|--|
| <b>Scope 1</b> | Direct emissions from things you own and control  | Energy in your workspace, fuel if you drive for your project, waste you directly produce       |
| <b>Scope 2</b> | Indirect emissions from energy you purchase   | Electricity for your home office, cloud tools you use, platforms that run your project         |
| <b>Scope 3</b> | Everything else in your value chain — suppliers, packaging, transport, the full journey of what you produce | Who makes your products, how they are shipped, the suppliers you choose, the packaging you use |

#### The most important insight about Scope 3

Scope 3 is where circular design makes the biggest difference — and where most businesses waste the most. By sharing infrastructure, using Deals Colony's existing frameworks, and choosing circular suppliers, your project's Scope 3 footprint is dramatically lower than building the same thing alone. We will track this together. It becomes part of your ESG impact story.

### The global and Australian frameworks we align with

You do not need to become an expert in all of these. But you should know the names, because they are the language your future procurement clients speak:

- GRI Standards — the world's most widely used sustainability reporting framework. Covers environmental, social, and economic impacts.
- ISSB / AASB S1 & S2 — Australia's mandatory climate reporting standards (effective January 2025). Your impact data is structured to align with these.
- UN SDGs — 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Every project is mapped to relevant SDGs to give your work a recognised global impact language.
- UN Global Compact — 10 principles on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption. Guides how we work and who we work with.
- CSR — Corporate Social Responsibility. The lens through which your network organisation members see the value of what you build.
- WWF Partnership Framework — inspires our supply chain approach: traceability, ethical sourcing, science-based targets.

## 7. The gift economy and continuity growth credits

These two ideas are how Deals Colony keeps the circular going even after your main project scope ends.

### The Gift Economy Exchange Program

Inspired by how natural ecosystems work — where nothing is wasted and every contribution feeds something else — the Gift Economy Exchange Program is a practical support system for the whole network.

Here is how it works:

- A member contributes something valuable to the community — a session, a skill, a resource, a collaboration idea
- They do not expect immediate payment
- In return, they gain connections, visibility, shared impact, and future collaboration opportunities
- Deals Colony converts their contribution into a dollar-credit value that can be used across network services

This allows the network to measure contribution, match the right skills to the right projects, and deliver outcomes within budget — especially for members building startup portfolios or stepping into their first paid project.

#### Real example

A retired HR professional joins as a flex contributor. She offers a free 1-hour workshop on building inclusive team cultures. That session gets measured as a \$400 contribution to the Gift Economy. Those credits are applied to her next project support package. Her expertise is not wasted — it circulates.

### Continuity Growth Credits

Once your main two-year scope ends, Continuity Growth Credits let you keep building without starting over.

They offer discounted access to:

- Expert support from the network
- Shared assets and frameworks
- Regenerative services and collaboration pathways
- New project opportunities as the network grows

Together, the Gift Economy Exchange Program and Continuity Growth Credits ensure your project does not lose momentum when the formal scope ends. The circle keeps going.

## 8. What happens next

You have read the handbook. Here is your path forward:

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Step 1</b> | <b>Complete your Braindump</b><br>This is your first real act of building. Not a form — a thinking tool. Map your ideas, your goals, your life commitments, and your energy. It takes 30-40 minutes. Do it in one sitting.<br>Click the <a href="#">Regenerative Venture Blueprint</a> to create your 1 <sup>st</sup> or next project. Enter your details, then download the file and email the completed copy back to us. |
| <b>Step 2</b> | <b>Your strategy call with Monika</b><br>A 2-hour session to map your ideas against the network, align your goals, and design your 6-week project around your schedule. Book via the <a href="#">link here</a> .   |
| <b>Step 3</b> | <b>We start building</b><br>Just 2 hours a week. Flexible to your schedule. We do the heavy lifting on strategy, structure, and visibility. You bring your ideas, your story, and your energy.   |

### Final thought from Monika

I built this because I needed it. I kept going because it worked. I am opening it up because no skill, story, or resource should ever go to waste — including yours. The next chapter is building \$1M projects together. But it starts with one braindump, one strategy call, and one idea at a time. Welcome to the Circular Innovation Network. Let's build something that matters.

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*Social Enterprise Finalist — Pine Rivers Small Business Awards 2024 & 2025*

## 9. More Info

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | <a href="#">Collaborator Ethics &amp; Governance Charter</a>  |
| 2  | <a href="#">Our Community Guidelines</a>  |
| 3  | <a href="#">Our Timeline</a>  |
| 4  | <a href="#">Our ESG Report - 2014-2024 Pilot</a>  |
| 5  | <a href="#">Our ESG Pilot Road-Map 2025-2027)</a>   |
| 6  | <a href="#">Blog 1: Building a retail journey fueled by community care and mindful impact</a>       |
| 7  | <a href="#">Blog 2: How Social Distancing Took Us from Retail to Community Wellbeing Innovation</a> |
| 8  | <a href="#">Blog 3: From Personal Challenge to Social Enterprise</a>                                |
| 9  | <a href="#">Blog 4: Our Next Big Thing....HHHJ</a>  |
| 10 | <a href="#">Collaborator Onboarding &amp; Compliance Form</a> (Team-up with Deals Colony)           |