

The Wrap Up

PROMOTING THE SOFT PLASTICS CIRCULAR ECONOMY recycling.kiwi.nz

Celebrating a decade of soft plastic recycling in 2025

This year marks a major milestone - a decade of soft plastic recycling in New Zealand.

In August 2015, The Packaging Forum signed a Deed of Funding with the Ministry for the Environment as part of a Waste Minimisation Fund-supported initiative aimed at providing access for recycling of soft plastics at drop off facilities for 70% New Zealanders by 2018.

The project commenced with the financial support of 15 member companies committing to a combined first year contribution of \$135,000. This was supported by a three-year WMF grant of \$700,930.

The plan involved setting up soft plastic drop off recycling bins at participating Foodstuffs, Woolworths and The Warehouse stores, initially in Auckland, expanding to Christchurch, Wellington, Dunedin, Hamilton and other parts of the country via a network of collectors. Soft plastic was baled and exported to Australia for reprocessing.

This system worked until it didn't work when China Sword impacted global recycling markets in 2018

and with no access to recycling in Australia, we stopped collections at the end of 2018.

In 2019, we signed a supply agreement with a New Zealand start up Future Post and subsequently in 2023 with saveBOARD. We are fortunate to have two reprocessors of post-consumer soft plastic in New Zealand. Globally, mechanical reprocessing of plastic remains the most reliable form of recycling, and chemical or advanced recycling large scale reprocessing plants continue to face challenges.

Whilst we were ahead of many other countries in putting in place collection systems for our soft plastic and we have enjoyed the benefit of having local reprocessing facilities, we have fallen behind other countries which have introduced Extended Producer Responsibility systems requiring producers to pay the net costs of recovering and recycling the materials they place on the market.

Our scheme is voluntary and whilst plastic packaging was declared a priority product in 2020, the co-design process of a mandatory Plastic Packaging Product Stewardship (PPPS)

Scheme now needs to shift from recommendations into reality to drive change.

To future proof our scheme, we are looking at the "gate fees" paid to processors to recycle post consumer soft plastics to ensure we are aligned with global realities. We are also investigating product stewardship database systems which will allow our members to report the soft plastics they place on the market and importantly to understand the costs of a PPPS on their business.

Europe is moving forward with ambitious targets for recyclability, recycled content and reuse by 2030. This will mean our exports into Europe will need to be compliant with the packaging regulations. However, if we want to have a thriving recycling industry in New Zealand, we need to get behind it and buy from all of the reprocessors that take our waste and turn it into new durable products. We are proud to promote these companies on our [website](http://recycling.kiwi.nz).

Without our recyclers, we can't recycle.

Ngā mihi nui
Lyn Mayes, KSM



NELSON TRIAL

Four months into Nelson’s trial of soft plastic collections at kerbside, up to 1,000 households have recycled 3,170kg soft plastic in 5,671 orange bags.

The trial is performing well against our measures of success.

These are fantastic results which show that making it easier for households to recycle, as well as greater promotion and awareness, result in an increased resource recovery.

However, the trial doesn’t currently meet a key requirement outlining that kerbside collections cost less than the current retail drop off network per tonne collected, and

do not incur additional logistics and carbon impact.

This was fully expected because we have been limited by the kerbside standardisation regulations which do not allow soft plastic to be placed in the commingled recycling bin and collected in the recycling truck.

Running a separate truck to pick up the orange bags was always going to add cost and add another vehicle to the road, so this is not surprising.

Similar trials in Maldon, UK started with a separate collection vehicle and subsequently integrated the “soft plastic collection bag” into the

commingled collection system.

The next important phase for any kerbside trial in New Zealand will be to test the orange bag being placed into the mixed dry recycling bin and picked off the conveyor at the material recovery facility.

We are hopeful that limited, clearly specified trials will be permitted to test proof-of-concept for soft plastics and indeed for other materials which are currently excluded from kerbside.

We will now survey the 1,000 households to learn what has worked well and what has not worked so well and to test some ideas for future trials.

Criteria	Trial performance	Detail
Contamination levels are equal to, or less than, store drop off contamination levels of 3.8% from non-compliant materials or foreign objects	0.41%	23 contaminated orange bags / 5,671 collected
Average weight of “orange bag” => 400 grams (based on UK and Australia experience)	559 grams	Range from 501 grams to 619 grams
Household participation >60%	63%	Average 630 bags from 1,000 households per collection round
Identifiable increase per capita collection rate	70% uplift in Nelson	Jul-Sep 24 scheme collected 7.89 tonnes from retail drop off Oct-Dec 24 scheme collected 11.42 tonnes from retail drop off plus 2 tonnes from kerbside = 13.4

NETWORK OF COLLECTORS

Across the country, the scheme works with social enterprises, transport companies, waste management companies, councils and even scheme members to effectively and efficiently collect soft plastic from public drop off recycling bins, as well as from members that have opted to pay for a collection service.

In some regions, Woolworths and Foodstuffs stores also organise their own logistics services.

The majority of our soft plastic is collected by Abilities Group (Auckland), Kilmarnock Enterprises (Christchurch), Earthlink (Wellington) and Redline Transport (Upper North Island).

This month Sunshine Yates Consulting audited bag weights at these four locations and found considerable variability in the weight of the green soft plastic bags collected from stores and from scheme members. This data will help us improve the accuracy of our reporting and inform our pricing model for non-store collections.

Local collections to local processors

- 1 **Northland** Waste Management
- 2 **Auckland** Abilities, Redline, Foodstuffs, Woolworths
- 3 **Thames Coromandel** Smart Environmental
- 4 **Hauraki** Hauraki Council
- 5 **Hamilton** Abilities, Woolworths
- 6 **Tauranga** Redline
- 7 **Gisborne** Walter Finlay
- 8 **Hawke's Bay** Bin Hire
- 9 **New Plymouth** Woolworths
- 10 **Whanganui** Whanganui Council
- 11 **Wellington + Wairarapa** Earthlink
- 12 **Nelson** Enviro NZ
- 13 **Marlborough** JBL
- 14 **Christchurch + Waimakariri** Kilmarnock
- 15 **Oamaru** Waitaki Resource Centre
- 16 **Queenstown, Alexandra + Wanaka** All Waste
- 17 **Dunedin** Waste Management
- 18 **Invercargill + Gore** Recycle South



Abilities loaded 87 bags into the baler which weighed 566kg



Gavin Allan and Debra Goulding, Foodstuffs; Polly Griffiths, Sustainability Trust; and Rob Langford, The Packaging Forum

Are you a member of our Caps & Lids Recycling Scheme programme?

Consumers can now drop off their caps and lids at selected Foodstuffs supermarkets and other locations across Auckland, Tauranga, Christchurch and Wellington. Since the initiative got underway in September 2024, more than four tonnes of plastic and metal caps and lids have been collected and dropped off for recycling.

Metal caps are sent to metal recyclers such as Hayes Metals and Simms Metals and plastic caps are being processed by PACT

Recycling in Auckland before being sent to Australia for recycling into new products such as wheelie bins and plant pots.

If you have untethered caps and lids on your products, the Caps and Lids Recycling Scheme is being set up to meet the ARL check locally requirements allowing members to use this label on their packaging. To find out how you can become a member, contact CALmanager@packagingforum.org.nz

[More here](#)



NAU MAI TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS



Epic Coffee
Munro Footwear Group
Pharmacare

Not a member?
Come and join us!



FOODSTUFFS EXPO

5-6 MARCH 2025
CLAUDELANDS

The Foodstuffs Expo is the largest B2B tradeshow in New Zealand and this year The Packaging Forum is showcasing our schemes.

More in the next issue.

Are you one of our 12k+ Facebook followers?

If not, head on over and like the Love NZ Soft Plastics Recycling Facebook page and keep up to date with everything happening in the soft plastic space as well as promoting your support!

facebook.com/softplasticrecycling

AROUND THE WORLD GLOBAL PACKAGING POLICIES

Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)

The PPWR was published in the Official Journal of the EU on 22 January 2025 and entered into force on 11 February and will be applied on 12 August 2026. The PPWR sets mandatory requirements for all packaging to be recyclable by 2030. It also establishes minimum recycled content levels for plastic packaging and introduces targets for reuse and refill systems.

By 1 January 2030

- Material recyclability will be classified as A, B or C. If packaging does not meet 70% recycling rate it will be restricted
- Requirements for recycled content ranging from 10% to 35%
- Minimum standards for packaging functionality

- considering weight and volume and shape
- Maximum empty space ratio for grouped packaging, transport packaging or e-commerce packaging of 50%
- Requirements for labelling
- Targets for reuse and refillable packaging

By 1 January 2035

- A new factor will be used for assessing packaging recyclability which will be a recycled at scale assessment

By 1 January 2038

- Class C packaging will be banned

By 1 January 2040

- Increased requirements for recycled content ranging from 25% to 65%

[Read more](#)



PackUK is established under DEFRA to administer the packaging EPR scheme in UK

The UK Government has established PackUK to implement the UK's new extended producer responsibility programme for packaging. This will shift the cost of managing household waste to producers. PackUK will set and raise the fees from obligated producers and pay local authorities for the delivery of collection and recycling services. The new head of the scheme administrator is Margaret Bates who was previously Managing Director of OPRL (UK equivalent of ARL).

[Read more](#)

Recycling regulations for UK businesses

The UK's simpler recycling regulations apply to businesses from 31 March 2025. The new rules apply to all businesses, healthcare and academic institutions with small businesses under 10 FTEs exempt until 31 March 2027.

WRAP has developed a waste calculator tool so businesses can calculate the amount of waste they create and how they can set up recycling systems.

[Read more](#)



**IF YOU
ARE NOT
BUYING
RECYCLED,
YOU
ARE NOT
RECYCLING**

FROM OUR PROCESSING PARTNERS

LEADING THE WAY TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR PLASTIC

saveBOARD

ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCT DECLARATION for Multi-use Panels

Of multiple products based on the average result of the product group. In accordance with ISO 14025 and EN 15804:2012+A2:2019/AC:2021

THIS WALL HAS SAVED 7,350kg OF PACKAGING WASTE FROM LANDFILL COLLECTED & RECYCLED BY OUR COMMUNITY

Program: The International EPD® System & Regional Programme EPD Australasia
Program operator: EPD International AB
Regional programme operator: EPD Australasia
EPD registration number: EPD-IES-0014117
Publication date: 2025-01-05
Valid until: 2030-01-05
Geographic Scope: Australia and New Zealand

An EPD should provide current information and may be updated if conditions change. The stated validity is therefore subject to the continued registration and publication of www.environmentalproductdeclaration.com

saveBOARD

We've just hit a major milestone - our building products are officially among the lowest carbon footprint materials you can choose!

Five Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) published on @epdaustralasia Australasia.

Covering our product range independently verified environmental impact.

Each sheet of saveBOARD installed saves between 12-30kg of carbon from your building project (depending on product used).

Stores carbon like timber products
Made from 99% recycled materials

Perfect for your events

saveBOARD's exposed prefinished linings bring the Dinosaurs of Patagonia exhibition to life. Our sustainable wall linings perfectly complement this incredible showcase - they're quick to install, fully recyclable, and create a stunning backdrop for these prehistoric giants. The next exhibition in Singapore has expressed interest in our solutions following the success in Auckland.

[More here](#)



FUTURE POST

Have you considered using recycled plastic rails for your next landscaping project?

Watch Future Post on show at the 2025 standardbred yearling Sales in Karaka