



Immediate release

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SOFT PLASTIC RECYCLING RETURNS TO DUNEDIN AND MOSGIEL

Soft plastic recycling collections “are go” again

The Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme is pleased to announce that collections of soft plastic for recycling in Dunedin and Mosgiel will resume with bins back in stores from today.

Collections in Dunedin and Mosgiel were halted in November 2022 due to loss of access to a baler to compress the plastic and sufficient storage facilities. The Scheme has worked hard to find an alternative sustainable solution so Dunedin and Mosgiel residents could recycle their soft plastic.

Soft Plastic Recycling bins are located at Countdown Dunedin South, Dunedin Central, Mailer Street, Anderson Bay and Mosgiel; The Warehouse Dunedin South; and, New World Centre City, Gardens and Mosgiel.

Waste Management will collect and bale the soft plastic, which will be transported to Future Post’s new Blenheim facility for recycling into fence posts destined for farms and wineries, as well as raised garden beds.

Lyn Mayes, Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme manager says the whole team is proud to be able to bring the Scheme back to Dunedin and Mosgiel.

“It was an incredibly hard decision to halt the service in November but was the right thing to do as it prevented the build-up of soft plastics which we were unable to store and transport for processing. Not only did we not have the space to store the collected soft plastic bags, but we also weren’t able to compact them for safe and efficient onward transport,” says Ms Mayes

“We are so pleased to be back in Dunedin as we know locals are very keen soft plastic recyclers. In the eight months from March to November 2022, we collected 12 tonnes of soft plastic from Dunedin which is equivalent to around two million bags or wrappers.

“We want to thank everyone in Dunedin and Mosgiel for being such loyal supporters of soft plastic recycling, and for being incredibly patient while we worked hard to find a solution. Having the new Future Post operation in Blenheim has also helped as we are now able to transport the collected soft plastic within the South Island, rather than up to Auckland. It’s exciting that we now have a brilliant, local South Island solution.”

To celebrate the return of soft plastic recycling to the region, the local team at Cottonsoft Dunedin, foundation supporter of the Scheme, is giving away a Future Post garden bed made from approximately 14,000 bread bags to a local school, and garden supplies so they can start their very own school garden.

In the year to end March 2023 the Scheme collected 589 tonnes of post-consumer soft plastic – the equivalent of 75 million bags or wrappers, and enough to be made into 50,000 Future Posts – or 250km worth of fencing, enough to fence the road from Dunedin to Ashburton.

The Scheme recently returned to the Marlborough, Nelson, and Tasman regions, and together with the additional collection points in Dunedin and Mosgiel joining the soft plastic collection service, more than 83% New Zealanders have access to a soft plastic recycling bin within 20km home or work.

Ms Mayes adds that in over the last 12 months, the Scheme has increased the number of drop off points by 33% which is incredible and reflects the growing interest in soft plastic recycling, and the need to divert as much waste away from landfill as possible.

There are also plans to further expand soft plastic recycling into Central Otago, and Ms Mayes says the Scheme is hoping to make an announcement soon.

Mayor of Dunedin Jules Radich says the community will be delighted to see the return of a soft plastic recycling option to the city.

“We all obviously want to avoid sending this stuff to landfill, so it’s great to see the service coming back to Dunedin.

“I congratulate all those involved in working towards this outcome.”

Debra Goulding, Sustainable Packaging Programme Manager for Foodstuffs NZ says: “At Foodstuffs we understand how important it is to our customers to be able to recycle soft plastic which is why we’re

delighted our New World stores in Dunedin and Mosgiel will once again be joining forces with a wider team of dedicated collectors, transporters and processors to make this work.”

David Benattar, Chief Sustainability Officer, The Warehouse Group says: “We're delighted to have soft-plastic recycling back in our The Warehouse South Dunedin store and available for our customers. Being part of this Scheme is one of the great ways we can help our community live more sustainably. We had a fantastic response from our Dunedin customers who recycled 1,380kg, which is equivalent to 219,000 pieces of soft plastic since the bin arrived in March 2022 at The Warehouse South Dunedin.”

Catherine Langabeer, Head of Sustainability, Countdown says: "We've found that hakarua (recycling) is the most common sustainability action taken by Kiwi shoppers - and we are committed to helping our customers to hakarua their kirihou ngohengohe (soft plastics). We know once you start to hakarua it's hard to go back, and so, we really appreciated our customers' understanding during the recent pause in soft plastic collections. Ngā mihi nui also to the Soft Plastics Recycling Scheme for the hard mahi behind the scenes to bring soft plastic recycling back to Mosgiel and Dunedin. We're delighted that our store drop-off locations have grown to five Countdown stores and will now provide this service to even more customers.”

Rob Langford, CEO, The Packaging Forum (operator of the Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme - SPRS) says the Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme is a voluntary product stewardship scheme run and funded by members.

“The welcome re-introduction of soft plastic recycling in the wider Dunedin region is the latest example of our commitment to leverage partnerships to overcome challenges and deliver industry led solutions. We worked hard to find an alternative logistics solution so we could re-start collections in Dunedin and Mosgiel; and what we have now is a real example of how industry can voluntarily collaborate and succeed in its responsibility to deal with the end-of-life recovery for packaging.”

"While we can be faced with logistical challenges across the entire national network, what we can promise that we will continue to balance processing capacity with collections across the country," says Mr Langford.

The Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme has over 193 members representing around 80% of post-consumer soft plastic packaging consumed by the food and grocery sector annually. The Scheme pays for the costs of collection from consumers through to paying the processors to recycle the plastic.

www.recycling.kiwi for more information on soft plastic recycling locations throughout the country.

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About The Packaging Forum's Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme.

The Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme is a voluntary product stewardship scheme operated by The Packaging Forum; a member-based organisation dedicated to packaging sustainability. Soft Plastics Recycling has been operating since 2015 and is 100% funded by its industry members to capture soft plastic packaging for recycling into new products. The Packaging Forum also operates the Glass Packaging Forum and technical advisory groups.

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