

The Wrap Up

PROMOTING THE SOFT PLASTICS CIRCULAR ECONOMY recycling.kiwi.nz

Councils getting behind soft plastic recycling

Since soft plastic recycling collections commenced in November 2015, councils have supported the Scheme in different ways through promoting it on their website and social media channels, to paying for collections at their community recycling facilities. Thames Coromandel and Hauraki District Councils work with the Scheme to share collection systems and Whanganui District Council collects and bales soft plastics at their MRF.

In a new first for New Zealand, Nelson City Council has agreed to co-fund the collection trial which we have set up in Nelson to allow the trial to continue whilst further work is done to determine how collections could be integrated within the council collection system.

Nelson Kerbside Recycling Trial – to become joint initiative with Nelson City Council

Nelson City Council has agreed to extend Nelson's 1,000-household trial of kerbside recycling for soft plastics, until July 2027. The costs of the extension are being met 50/50 from 1 April 2026 between Council and The Packaging Forum's Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme.

The trial was initiated by The Packaging Forum in October 2024 and has had great support from households. The extension of the trial enables Council to consider, as part of its next long-term plan, whether to extend the scheme beyond the 1,000 homes to city wide.

Mayor Nick Smith said that: "the most difficult part of any recycling initiative is changing household habits and finding markets for products. It would be a backwards step to stop this innovative scheme, which is working so well." He added that "I am proud that Nelson is at the forefront of expanding recycling and of how supportive our households have been. I also thank The Packaging Forum and Future Post for enabling us to be part of this initiative."

Some interesting stats since the trial start back in Oct 2024:

- Participating households have put out nearly **16,000 bags** so an average of 16 bags per household or just over one bag per month.
- This equates to **8,998kg of soft plastic** and means around **1.4 million bags** or wrappers have been diverted from landfill and turned into approximately **900 Future Post fence posts**.
- Over the same period, **47 tonnes** of soft plastic have been dropped off at stores in the wider Nelson Tasman region with drop off levels increasing since the kerbside trial commenced.

The Scheme and Council will jointly apply to the Ministry for the Environment to ensure official kerbside trial protocols are met.

You can watch Nelson Council's decision [here](#).



Bringing soft plastic recycling to Palmerston North

Palmerston North City Council has agreed to work with The Packaging Forum to collect soft plastic from stores and bale the plastic in a first for the city. Council approved investment in a baler and a covered area to store plastic bags and to bale and store bales for the Scheme. We know residents have long been asking for the service to come to the city, and so we are delighted that Council has stepped in to provide logistical support to collect and bale soft plastics. We expect to commence the trials mid-2026 and this will increase access to soft plastic recycling to 89% of New Zealanders. Soft plastic collected from the region will be sent to one of our reprocessing plants either at Future Post in Waiuku or saveBOARD in Hamilton.

Ngā mihi nui



Lyn Mayes, KSM
Soft Plastic Recycling
Scheme Manager



Craig Miller
CEO
The Packaging Forum

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

In December 2025, the Government announced it will modernise New Zealand's waste and litter laws by placing the Bill on the Legislation Programme and establish the new Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport (MCERT). MCERT will bring together the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Transport, and local government functions from the Department of Internal Affairs into one agency.

The Waste Reform will allow for the establishment an industry-driven Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework with empowered Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs), simplify data and reporting through balanced compliance and provide the settings which will enable schemes like Container Return System (CRS) and Plastic Packaging Product Stewardship (PPPS) to be implemented in future. The Government plans to pass the legislation before the 2026 general election.

Introducing a Soft Plastic Database for New Zealand

Under EPR, producers are charged according to the tonnes of packaging they put on the market. We are working with Valpak (part of Reconomy Group) to develop a soft plastic database system for scheme members to submit data, which Valpak will analyse and validate. Valpak will also provide a "ready reckoner" to help members estimate their soft plastic packaging volumes and offer bespoke support services as needed. The initial focus is on soft plastics because the Packaging Forum has applied for priority product accreditation, which requires a reporting database for members.

Please join us at an introductory webinar with Valpak

Preparing for EPR – Introducing the first database for The Packaging Forum's soft plastic recycling scheme. All you need to know about reporting | Date and invitation will be sent out soon, with the webinar to be held in late April



2025 SNAPSHOT

892

TONNES
SOFT PLASTIC
TURNED INTO
POSTS, RAILS,
BOLLARDS &
BUILDING
MATERIAL

91%

REPROCESSED AT
FUTURE POST

9%

REPROCESSED AT
SAVEBOARD

87%

POPULATION
HAVE ACCESS TO
RECYCLING
WITHIN 20KMS
OF HOME OR
WORK

320

PUBLIC
DROP OFF
LOCATIONS

137

MILLION
ITEMS

TURNED INTO
97,000 POSTS

NO FOOD | DRY | EMPTY

**RECYCLE
SOFT PLASTIC
PACKAGING
HERE**

YES please
BAC



Multi family collection bins in British Columbia - pink for soft plastic

Update from the team at Recycle BC in British Columbia, Canada

In 2024, Recycle BC collected 5,432 tonnes of flexible plastic—24% of the amount supplied to the market. After a successful pilot programme from November 2021 to May 2022, the District of West Vancouver became the first community to permanently implement segregated flexible plastics collection for multi-family buildings from July 2024. In June 2025, the District began monthly kerbside collection with each household receiving a pink box for flexible plastics.

In 2025, Recycle BC started offering the option in their collection contracts for all kerbside and multi-family collection partners to add segregated collection of flexible plastics to their collection programmes, for which an incentive per household would be paid. When Maple Ridge switched to direct service by Recycle BC on 1 January 2025, this included kerbside collection of flexible plastics. In 2024, Recycle BC partnered with the Vancouver School Board to collect flexible plastics brought by students from home, compensating schools for each kilogram collected.

Recycle BC is collaborating with ÉEQ and the Circular Plastic Taskforce (CPT) to classify flexible plastic packaging in Canada and establish a baseline understanding of their material composition; this initiative is known as Biblioflex.

WEBINARS

Global Stewardship webinar series

The Packaging Forum is supporting a series of EPR-focused webinars, sponsored by Soft Plastic Stewardship Australia (SPSA) on behalf of its major member brands. Craig Miller, CEO of the Packaging Forum, and Lyn Mayes, Manager of the Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme, will be panellists at each session and available to address your questions about New Zealand product stewardship. If you missed the first four webinars, you can catch up by watching them [here](#)

Money and responsibility: How European PROs, regulators and retailers to deal with 'free-riders' for a level playing field | Session 5 of the SPSA sponsored series | Tuesday 12 March 2026 | 6.15–7.15pm NZT

This next webinar in the series examines how two leading European jurisdictions have built stewardship schemes reducing "free-riders" and enabling effective planning and investment. Learn how they achieved over 80% company participation—far exceeding the voluntary rates in Australia and New Zealand—and discover regulatory tools, governance models, and enforcement strategies that ensure reliable funding and measurable outcomes, including the compliance role of retailers.

Speakers: Jaana Roine (marketing director, Green Dot Norway), discussing producers, PROs, retailers, and taxation as a backstop. Marc Adams (director PRO Regulations, Belgium Interregional Commission), covering regulatory roles, governance, and oversight effectiveness.

[Click here to register](#)



Plastoil Enespa, Hamburg

New processing technology takes time but is on its way

The Packaging Forum has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for supply with Plastoil NZ in advance of Plastoil's planned entry to the New Zealand market. Plastoil plans to install its WASTX Plastic technology with pre-treatment plant in Q4 2026 with full commissioning in early 2027. The Packaging Forum has been closely involved with Plastoil since 2018 and has visited prototype plants in Prague and the UK and technology owners Enespa in Germany. APR Plastics in Australia will open its WASTX plant in Victoria soon. plastoil.com

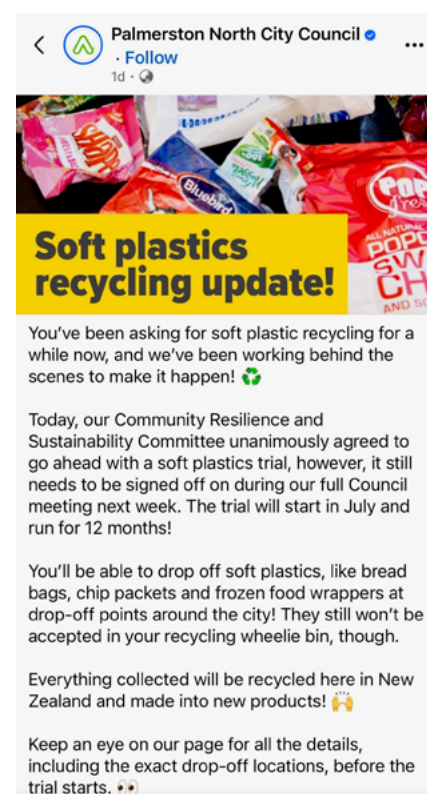
We also started discussions with Nilo in 2017 and have recently had some of our plastic analysed by their technical team with more work being undertaken at their prototype plant in Auckland. Nilo makes industrial adhesives from plastic waste with the binder used in the production of wood products, and its new plant will be operational in 2027. nilo.net

There will always be some plastic waste which is hard to recycle. Instead of sending such materials to landfill, Enviro NZ can turn these hard to deal with materials into Process Engineered Fuel (PEF) which replaces imported coal to power cement kilns. The Packaging Forum and Enviro NZ have proactively commissioned Thinkstep to conduct an official Lifecycle Analysis research project, to accurately compare the impact of plastic waste going to landfill with the same waste being processed into PEF. We will publish those results later in the year which will help determine our view on where this processing option may sit as a possible part of the overall plastic waste solution.

Are you one of our 11k+ Facebook followers?

If not, head on over and like the Love NZ Soft Plastic 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



“ This is soo great!!
No sending them
all away anymore!
Thanks PNCC - much
appreciated by us
and the planet!!

“ Best news I've heard
this week! Yay!!

FROM OUR PROCESSING PARTNERS

LEADING THE WAY TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR PLASTIC

saveBOARD

Buy recycled at Bunnings for your workplace and homes

saveBOARD is planning a four-month trial of its cut-to-length 2Faced boards, made entirely from recycled soft plastics collected via the Scheme. The boards will be available in **25 Bunnings stores across New Zealand** during the trial. This marks the first use of 100% soft plastic waste, potentially increasing how much saveBOARD recycles each month. Watch this space!

One saveBOARD 2Faced board (1.2m x 1.2m x 10mm) diverts 12.5kg of soft plastic from landfill equivalent to around 2,000 plastic bags or wrappers.

Last year, saveBOARD recycled approximately 9% of the Scheme's plastic. Supporting this trial at your local Bunnings will help ensure that the boards are available in the long term and contribute to expanding onshore processing capacity for soft plastics. These boards are a great alternative to plywood and ideal for DIY jobs.



Future Post

Future Post has recently launched a new product - wheel stops! Durable, strong and made from 100% recycled plastic - would look fantastic in any carpark!!

A complementary product to Future Posts fantastic looking bollards!

Mitre10 stock Future Post

Explore the range of Future Post products online at Mitre 10. Whether you're landscaping, installing a fence, or growing vegetables in your garden, Future Post has a solution to fit your needs.

If you are not buying recycled, you are not recycling!

<  **Hon Dr Nick Smith** · Follow
12 Feb ·

Council this morning agreed to extend Nelson's 1000-household trial kerbside recycling scheme for soft plastics, the first in NZ, until July 2027. The costs of the extension are being met 50% by Council or \$15,375 for the 15 months.

The trial was initiated by The Packaging Forum in Oct '24 and has had great support from households. An average 100 plastic bags/wrappers per month per household have been collected, or 100,000 per month, and more than 1.5 million so far. These have been remanufactured into fence posts, bollards and railings by Future Post in Blenheim.

The rationale for extending the trial is that the most difficult part of any recycling initiative is changing household habits and finding markets for products. It would be a backwards step to stop this innovative scheme, which is working so well.

Council will need to get an exemption from the Ministry for the Environment from national standards for kerbside recycling. The current standard allows for paper, cardboard, glass, aluminium, steel and hard plastics but not soft plastics. The standards were set before there were any viable options for recycling soft plastics. I am confident the Ministry and Government will support the exemption and know they are interested in its learnings and success.

“

Excellent. I'm a big fan of this scheme!

“

Fantastic news



NAU MAI TO OUR
NEWEST MEMBERS

Central Landscape Systems

Espresso Direct (Ignite)

NZ Apple Products

Savour Life (Sunrice)

Van Dyck Fine Foods

Not a member?
Come and join us!