

The Wrap Up

PROMOTING THE SOFT PLASTICS CIRCULAR ECONOMY recycling.kiwi.nz

Spring 2026

Welcome to the spring 2026 edition of The Wrap Up. It has been a busy winter for the Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme, with industry events, member meetings and site visits providing valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges for soft plastics recycling in New Zealand.

Lyn made the most of her time in the UK, attending conferences, meeting with stakeholders and visiting recycling plants to better understand how overseas systems are evolving. One clear takeaway is that New Zealand's Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme remains distinctive. Established in 2015, it is one of the longest-running soft plastic take-back schemes, operating as an industry-wide programme funded by more than 200 producers, retail brands and other organisations to support collections, logistics and processing.

By comparison, UK front-of-store collections began in 2017 and are typically managed by individual retailers through their own systems. Whether soft plastics are collected at store, through customer drop-off points or through kerbside systems under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), the lesson is the same: collection is only one part of

the equation. Without strong processing capacity and reliable end markets for recycled products, soft plastics will not be recycled at scale.

This message came through strongly at the UK Sustainability & Impact Summit in London, where speakers repeatedly reinforced that recycling only works when recycled materials are also purchased and used. Flexible plastics continue to face major capacity and value challenges, with high gate fees, limited end markets and difficult economics. This is why our mantra remains simple: **You are not recycling if you're not buying recycled.**

That focus is shaping our work here in New Zealand. We are continuing to support existing re-processors while exploring new partnerships, including with Pact Recycling in Auckland and via an export trial to IQ Renew in Australia, to strengthen local and regional processing pathways.

The newsletter also shares examples of what is possible when investment, technology and collaboration come together. From Amcor's Heanor site in Derbyshire, which combines mechanical and chemical recycling, to emerging advanced recycling technologies such as Mura Technology's



Lyn checks out soft plastic inflow at Amcor Recycling

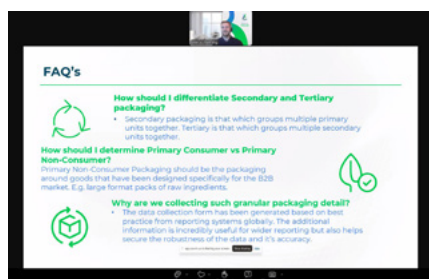
Hydro-PRT® process in Teesside - international developments are helping inform how we think about future opportunities for soft plastics in New Zealand.

As always, thank you to our members, collection partners, re-processors and supporters for helping build a more circular future for soft plastics. We hope this edition provides useful updates, practical examples and a shared commitment to delivering effective product stewardship.

Ngā mihi nui

Lyn Mayes, KSM
Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme
Manager

Craig Miller
CEO The Packaging Forum



VALPAK PRODUCER REPORTING FOR THE SOFT PLASTIC RECYCLING SCHEME

If you place soft plastic packaging on the market in New Zealand, we encourage you to report your tonnages through the new Valpak-managed reporting portal. We have held two webinars on this programme, and if you missed these you can access them here:

Webinar 1: Launch of Valpak Reporting System for the Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme. Was an introduction to the programme.

[More here](#)

Webinar 2: Valpak Reporting System for producers - practical guidance on what and how to report. The second webinar responded to common questions from producers and provided practical guidance on what information to report and how to submit it.

[Watch here](#)

This is a voluntary service for our members recognising that a clear summary of the amount of soft plastic consumed by members will help us design an effective mandatory producer responsibility scheme for New Zealand.

If you would like to discuss reporting in person, please contact Marcus Farthing softplasticsrecycling@valpak.co.uk

SMARTER STORE SOLUTIONS TRIALS IMPROVING EFFICIENCY AND INCREASING RECOVERY

Good Wrap Recycling Bulk Bags trial

A recent soft plastic bulk bag collection trial with Woolworths, Good Wrap Recycling and Mainfreight has shown strong potential to make pre-consumer soft plastic recovery easier and more efficient for stores. The trial was completed across five Woolworths stores – Dargaville, Waiheke Island, Taupō South, Whakatāne and Rotorua – with each store collecting an average of 2.8 bulk bags weighing around 20kg per bag per week. The process uses rolls of 30 bags, with consignment notes managed through Good Wrap Recycling and Mainfreight systems to support simple tracking and collection.

The bulk bags are now being sent to Good Wrap Recycling, where they can be measured more accurately with the post-consumer soft plastic baled to be sent to one of our re-processors and the white bulk bags recycled back into new bags.

Following the successful pilot, the programme is expanding to additional Auckland and Waikato stores to reduce collection costs and improve store efficiency. We are also keen to explore how pre-consumer plastics – such as PE bags removed from clothing before items are placed on shelves

or hangers – could be collected through the Good Wrap Recycling system and remade into courier bags or bulk bags.

Manco Environmental Compactor Bins make a big difference

A five-store compacted-bag trial commenced in May 2026 across Thames–Coromandel, Birkenhead and Matamata, testing whether larger, compacted soft plastic bags could reduce pressure on back-of-store collection systems. Early results are encouraging, with average store volumes reducing to just three compacted bags. This has significantly reduced staff handling time, freed up back of house capacity, and improved hygiene for participating stores.

Manco is collecting compacted bags from store compactor bins and has now extended its service across Thames–Coromandel to pick up all bags from stores and council facilities. Operationally, the system has performed smoothly, service response has been rapid, and there have been no issues for stores or customers. Discussions are now underway with Manco to extend the service where cost effective to fill gaps in the network, and support future growth as processing capacity increases.

AIP State of the Industry webinar

Both Lyn Mayes and Craig Miller are joining the panel for the **AIP State of the Industry: The Future of Soft Plastics in Australia & New Zealand** webinar being held on Wednesday 7 October 2026 at 12pmNZT.

For more information, and to register, [visit here](#)



Palmerston North resident Judith Benett dropping off her soft plastics at Ferguson Street Recycling Centre says she is delighted to have somewhere local to drop off her soft plastic as she used to save it and take it to New Plymouth.

SOFT PLASTIC RECYCLING ARRIVES IN PALMERSTON NORTH & FEILDING

Soft plastics recycling has finally arrived in Palmerston North, with a new 12-month trial making it easier for residents to recycle bags, wrappers and packaging. Delivered in partnership with Palmerston North City Council and the Packaging Forum's Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme, the trial provides four free drop-off locations across Palmerston North at Ferguson Street Recycling Centre; The Warehouse; New World Broadway; Woolworths at The Plaza. There are also two locations in Feilding at Woolworths and The Warehouse.

Collected plastic is recycled into new products such as posts, bumper stops, bollards, building panels and wall linings, helping keep valuable material out of landfill and supporting New Zealand's circular economy.

Palmerston North Mayor Grant Smith says it's something he has personally wanted for some time, and something the community has been asking for. "We've heard from a lot of people who wanted a simple way to recycle soft plastics closer to home. Until now, many people have been storing them in cupboards, taking them out of town, or missing out altogether. That seemed silly for a city our size, being one of the last to recycle soft plastics. Now it's as easy as adding a quick stop to your regular shopping trip. You can drop off your soft plastics for free at these convenient spots across the city, knowing they'll be recycled through an established national programme."

NEW PROCESSING PARTNER HELPS CLOSE THE LOOP ON SOFT PLASTICS IN NEW ZEALAND

Pact Recycling

Pact Recycling NZ is helping close the loop on soft plastics after more than a decade of technical development. Working with the Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme, Pact has successfully trialled post-consumer mixed polymer soft plastics through its upgraded East Tamaki wash plant, turning hard-to-recycle materials such as chip packets, food pouches and plastic bags into durable products including underground cable cover and plastic plywood. Following an initial 5,000kg trial, Pact has now moved into a three-month trial processing approximately 20,000kg per month.

"This trial demonstrates what can be achieved when industry collaboration is backed by the right infrastructure and technical expertise," says Steve Mead, General Manager, Pact Recycling NZ. Lyn Mayes added: "this culminates more than 10 years of Pact Recycling innovating its technology and plant to find a solution for post-consumer soft plastics."

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& RETURNING
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Surti

—
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POLICY NEWS UPDATES

Update on the Product Labelling Regulatory Review

The Ministry for Regulation has completed its Product Labelling Review, and has published its findings and recommendations

You can read the full report and supporting material on the review webpage [here](#).

The review included several findings based on what the Ministry had heard through consultation and has made 16 recommendations to modernise the system for consumers, businesses and regulators.

Cabinet has agreed to progress a focused package of changes, including enabling a pathway for digital labelling and strengthening food and beverage labelling guidance.

The Ministry will now work with agencies and stakeholders on implementation.

New nationwide rural recycling scheme for farm plastics

On 7 September Minister for the Environment, Nicola Grigg, announced that the Government is introducing a new nationwide rural recycling scheme that will significantly increase the recovery of farm plastics. The new Rural Recycling Scheme will start from 1 March 2027.

“The new, regulated Rural Recycling Scheme will expand recycling and recovery of agrichemical containers, bale wrap and silage sheet, with a new nationwide take-back system,



replacing the current voluntary recycling schemes.

“The scheme has been designed by industry and – with the support of farmers – will significantly increase the recovery and recycling of farm plastics. It will be managed by the not-for-profit Agrecovery Foundation.

“We’ve listened to feedback from farmers and growers who wanted a simple take-back system that is easy to use and can take all the usual plastic farm products into one recycling system.

“The voluntary schemes, operated by Agrecovery and Plasback, currently collect under half of the in-scope plastics that farmers and growers use. The new national system will significantly increase recycling and recovery, and reduce the quantity of farm plastics going to landfills, being buried or burnt on farms.”

The scheme will require producers to contribute a small fee for products sold to support a free,

nationwide network of take-back sites and collection services.

The existing regional network of around 240 take-back sites will be expanded to allow for the increased volume of rural plastics for recycling markets.

“Recycling services will operate in tandem with collection services for agrichemicals, making it easier to safely manage unused end-of-life products,” Ms Grigg says.

“Take-back services will also be available to other users of agrichemicals and farm plastics including the forestry, manufacturing, hospitality, tourism and sport sectors, and local authorities and contractors. Households will also have a bespoke national service for their pest and weed control products.”

Existing voluntary schemes will continue to operate until the new Scheme starts.

[Find out more.](#)



Lessons from Amcor's Heanor soft plastics recycling plant

During Lyn's recent visit to the UK, she met with Mike Baxter, Amcor's Director of Government Relations, who has worked in the industry for almost 40 years and was site manager when the Heanor Mill opened.

The Heanor site in Derbyshire is notable because it co-locates mechanical and chemical recycling for soft plastics, offering a useful example of how different technologies can work alongside one another to process challenging flexible plastic materials.

Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the plant has capacity to process more than 4,000 tonnes of soft plastics each year through mechanical recycling, and up to 2,500 tonnes through chemical recycling. Amcor processes material collected through front-of-store schemes for Tesco and other retailers. The material is pre-sorted by Eurokey to improve quality before being washed, shredded and extruded into pellets at Heanor.

Amcor has partnered with Greenback to install a 2,500-tonne-per-annum chemical recycling unit at the site, using Enval technology. Lyn discussed the technology's potential suitability for New Zealand with Greenback Chief Operating Officer Bob Smith. This builds on our interest in Enval since first meeting the company in 2022, following its initial joint venture with Nestlé in Mexico.



MURA TECHNOLOGIES: ADVANCED RECYCLING AT WILTON TEESSIDE

During Lyn's visit to the UK, she met Richard Daley, Chief Technology Officer at Mura Technologies, to learn more about the company's Hydro-PRT® advanced recycling technology and its role in the global project pipeline.

Hydro-PRT® is Mura's proprietary hydrothermal process, using supercritical water to convert multi-layer flexible and rigid plastic waste back into fossil-equivalent feedstocks that can be used to make new plastics. Richard described the Wilton Teesside plant as a "toy-sized oil refinery", using similar equipment to a full-scale refinery but at a smaller scale. The plant has capacity to process 20,000 tonnes of plastic waste each year and is still being commissioned. Once fully operational, it could offer an important pathway for separating difficult-to-recycle plastics back into oil and other valuable feedstocks.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

UK Plastic Packaging Tax data shows demand challenge for recycled content

New UK Plastic Packaging Tax data shows that 37% of plastic packaging manufactured in or imported into the UK was still taxable because it did not contain at least 30% recycled plastic. While this is a slight improvement from 38% the previous year, Reconomy says progress appears to be slowing.

David Gudgeon, Reconomy's head of external affairs, said persistently low virgin plastic prices mean recycled content is often more expensive to use. He said policy measures including Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility, Simpler Recycling and the Plastic Packaging Tax will be important in shifting demand but warned that UK recycling infrastructure will also need investment to handle higher volumes.

PackUK data points to early recyclability shift

PackUK says early producer reporting under the UK's new packaging Extended Producer Responsibility system is beginning to show positive recyclability trends. At the Sustainability & Impact Summit in London, attended by Lyn, PackUK Chief Strategy Officer Esther Carter shared the first-year data from producers using the Recyclability Assessment Methodology.

The initial profile shows 10% of producers reporting packaging that is fully recyclable at scale, 75% with a mix of ratings, and 14% exclusively in the red, or not recyclable, category. Over time, modulated charges are expected to encourage producers to shift towards more recyclable materials, with base fees likely to increase as the system develops.

FROM OUR PROCESSING PARTNERS

LEADING THE WAY TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR PLASTIC



Buy saveBOARD's soft plastic board at Bunnings

2Faced boards, made from 100% recycled post-consumer soft plastic with no added glues or chemicals, is now available in 25 Bunnings Warehouse stores across New Zealand. Each board diverts approximately 12.5kg of soft plastic from landfill, giving shoppers a practical opportunity to buy products made from the very plastics they recycle.

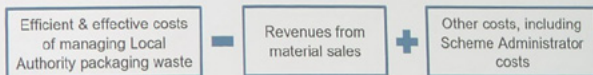
This is the circular economy in action. Soft plastics collected through supermarket and retail drop-off points are transformed into durable, useful products that New Zealanders can see, use, and purchase. Creating demand for products made from recycled materials helps keep the recycling loop going.

Look out for 2Faced boards at your local Bunnings and see New Zealand soft plastics being put to work.

[Check it out here](#)

Recap: pEPR Fee Calculation Method

Cost per tonne for (amber) materials in each packaging category =



Total weight of packaging placed on market (i.e., reported tonnage)

! PackUK must 'balance the books' in each year

...ing approximation and simplification of the calculation provisions in the pEPR Regulations.

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

FROM OUR PROCESSING PARTNERS



Future Post stopping traffic!

There have been a couple of great projects using Future Post products around Auckland over the past quarter.

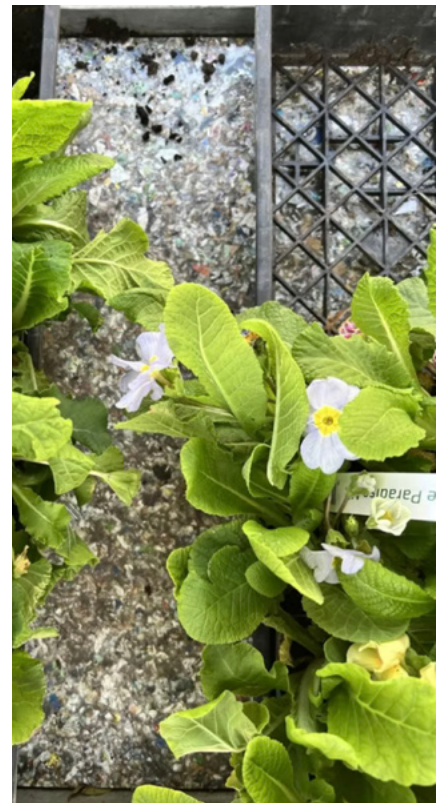
Wilsons Carpark, Auckland Central is now using Future Post recycled plastic wheel stops, providing a durable New Zealand-made alternative to traditional concrete and rubber products. Unlike many imported wheel stops, which are made using waste materials from overseas, Future Post wheel stops are manufactured right here in New Zealand from recycled New Zealand waste plastic.

At Woolworths Botany, Future Post 135mm square posts have

been used as bollards. 100% made in New Zealand from recycled New Zealand waste plastic, they're durable, low maintenance, won't rot or split, and look pretty smart too!

It's great to see recycled New Zealand plastic being put to practical use in everyday infrastructure around Auckland and keeping waste plastic material in use and out of landfill.

The Future Post team thanks the Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme, its members and MCERT for their ongoing support in making projects like these possible.



From supermarket soft plastics to nursery planter boards

The same soft plastics you drop off for recycling at the supermarket are also being transformed by saveBOARD into durable, waterproof nursery planter boards.

These boards are used to hold seedlings before they are sold, providing another practical example of how recycled soft plastics are finding valuable new uses in New Zealand.

[Check it out here](#)

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recycling!**