

Contacts:

Lyn Mayes, The Packaging Forum  
Phone 021 471 261; [lynmayes@madworld.co.nz](mailto:lynmayes@madworld.co.nz)

Andrew Hewett, Chair The Packaging Forum; Phone:  
021629106



# Press Release

## **1.6 million soft plastic bags and wrappers dropped off in 100 days at Auckland stores**

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The Packaging Forum says that 100 days into its Soft Plastic Recycling Project, Aucklanders have dropped off over 10 tonnes of soft plastic packaging at New World, PAK'nSAVE, The Warehouse and selected Countdown stores in Auckland. That's equivalent to around 1.6 million units of packaging with volumes increasing every week as people get used to collecting the bags at home and dropping them off when they go shopping.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> March, 22 stores in Hamilton and Cambridge will start the service with plans to expand to Canterbury mid-year and Greater Wellington region in October.

Lyn Mayes, Project Manager says:

“Soft plastic food and grocery packaging was destined for the rubbish bin until we launched the Love NZ soft plastic recycling initiative in Auckland in November. This week we reached for the first time 1 tonne of soft plastic or 180,000 units of packaging collected from customers at 70 Auckland stores.”

“REDCycle which operates the programme tracks progress by suburb and by store. Out in front at the moment is North Auckland which benefits from having the Countdown stores involved in the trial and has contributed 39% of the total tonnage to-date, followed by Central and East Auckland (25% share).”

“Customers at New World Eastridge and PAK'Nsavve Wairau have collected the most so far with a massive 1310kilograms from these two stores since the start of the campaign.”

“New signage has been introduced to help reduce contamination in the bins and stores have experimented with the best place to position the bin for best results. Repositioning the bins has had customers contacting us because they were concerned the bins had been taken away. We've just launched a Facebook page so encourage people to tell us what they like and make suggestions – you can link to us on <http://www.recycling.kiwi.nz/soft-plastics>”

“We know that people around the country want to have the new recycling service in place now but we need to move at a pace which allows us to provide stores with individual support as they introduce the new systems and implement a cost effective logistics solution. We will expand the service as quickly as we can.”

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Andrew Hewett, Chair of The Packaging Forum says:-

“This is one of a raft of programs that Industry funds, with support and funding from the Government, to educate kiwis on the value of recycling and the critical role waste minimisation plays in reinforcing New Zealand’s clean, green reputation. It’s incredible to think that less than 12 months ago we were talking about a concept to recycle plastic bags and we are now moving from a trial in Auckland to a national roll out. Whilst the project is part funded by the Government’s Waste Minimisation Fund, industry has to match fund the three-year project and ensure it is sustainable beyond this period.”

“In addition to funding from The Packaging Forum and the participating retailers, this programme is supported by Asaleo Care, Cottonsoft, Goodman Fielder, Kimberly-Clark, Mars, Mondelez, Mother Earth, Nestle, NZ Post, Pams, Pure Delish, Simplot, Sunrice, Wrigley, Amcor, Astron, Elldex and Replasand we encourage other brands to get involved.”

## **What the Stores Say?**

### **Foodstuffs**

Foodstuffs New Zealand’s Sustainability Manager, Mike Sammons says that stores and customers have been massively supportive of the programme as demonstrated by the quantity of packaging between placed in the bins. The programme is a very important part of the strategy to move our stores towards having 100% recyclable packaging for our customers.

### **Progressive Enterprises**

National Communications and Corporate Affairs Manager Affairs James Walker, says "Countdown has been delighted by our customers’ response in our North Shore stores participating in the programme, and we encourage them to keep bringing in their soft plastics for recycling".

### **The Warehouse**

Paul Walsh, GM for Community & Environment, says “We’re absolutely thrilled by the recycling efforts of the community which have been brought about by this programme. This is a significant first step towards creating a more sustainable New Zealand, and we’re looking forward to rolling this programme out to more of our stores throughout the country.”

### **For Information**

**The Packaging Forum** promotes the Love NZ brand under license from the Ministry for Environment.  
[www.recycling.kiwi.nz](http://www.recycling.kiwi.nz)

**RED Group** is a Melbourne-based consulting and recycling organisation that’s developed and implemented an innovative recycling initiative, the REDcycle Program. The programme provides a recovery and recycling solution for postconsumer and retail soft plastic packaging, diverting it from landfill and using it instead as a resource for Australian-made recycled products for schools and communities. Since the launch of the REDcycle Program in 2011, RED Group has collected enough pieces of soft post-consumer packaging to circle Australia two and a half times. RED Group is pleased to be a foundation partner of New Zealand’s Soft Plastic Recycling Programme.

**Abilities** was established in 1959 to provide meaningful work and the opportunity for personal development for people with disabilities and the Glenfield based organization now employs over 130 people who might struggle to find paid work otherwise.