



Media release

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef,
Minister for Science and Innovation
The Honourable Leanne Linard MP

27 September, 2024

Soft plastics recycling trial to kick off

- The Miles Government is investing \$1 million to support the roll-out of a soft plastics recycling pilot in Queensland.
- Communities across Queensland will soon be able to recycle soft plastics at four new trial hubs
- The hubs will trial a variety of collection options to see what works best for urban, regional and remote Queenslanders

The Miles Government is partnering with the Soft Plastics Stewardship Australia Limited to conduct a pilot soft plastics recycling scheme in Queensland.

The government has committed \$1 million to the pilot, which will trial new approaches to recycle the waste.

Under the pilot, trial hubs will be established in locations across Queensland to test different ways to allow people to return soft plastic packaging.

Queenslanders have been hanging-on to their soft plastics since the REDcycle program ceased operating, and they've made it clear they want an alternative. The government has listened and acted.

The trials will start in Brisbane before the end of the year, with the Sunshine Coast, Goondiwindi and Cairns to follow in the coming months.

The hubs will trial a variety of collection options over a 12-month period to see what works best for urban, regional and remote Queenslanders.

This will include:

- kerbside yellow-lid bin collections in specific locations;
- return to store;
- council drop off locations; and
- drop off at central points such as container refund points.

Assessment of each collection channel will help inform future decisions on which model or mix of collections provide the best approach for various communities.

The pilots will also help identify potential options for local processing of soft plastics and explore potential end markets for recycled product.

This aims to avoid stockpiling and long-distance transport of soft plastics and to help create local markets and job opportunities.

As part of the trial, the government will work with Central Queensland University to process some of the collected material at its test facilities, to assess contamination tolerance levels for various end products.

This will help refine the messaging for consumers about the types of soft plastic packaging that can be collected as well as identify viable end-markets for recovered soft plastics.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Leanne Linard:

"The community has made it clear how much they value the ability to recycle soft plastics and want to see it return," she said.

“We know they also want to ensure it is sustainable in the long term and that’s why it’s so important to discover what works best for Queensland’s varied communities and regions.

“Queenslanders have already returned close to nine billion glass and plastic containers to container refund points under the government’s highly successful container refund scheme.

“Because people are used to bringing their containers to these sites we want to see if this model works for returning soft plastics, among other options.

“It’s also vital that we have cost-effective options for processing the material that are collected and viable end-product markets.

“Queensland is growing rapidly, and we need to do more to keep waste out of landfill and turn it into useful new products.

“We’re committed to moving towards a circular economy, where as much valuable material as possible is diverted from landfill through reuse, recycling and remanufacturing.”

Quotes attributable to Member for Cairns, Michael Healy:

“I know many Cairns residents were disappointed with the RedCycle scheme stopped operating and have since looked for ways to recycle their soft plastics.

“The Miles Government has worked with key stakeholders to develop this pilot and I delighted that one of the trial sites will be in Cairns.

“We must do everything we can to recycle as much of our waste as possible so its not dumped in landfill or finding its way into our waterways where it causes environmental harm.”

Quotes attributable to Member for Caloundra, Jason Hunt:

“Sunshine Coast residents are passionate about protecting the environment and they want to do more to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.

“You only have to look at the success of the Miles Government’s Containers for Change program to know Queenslanders respond positively to well-implemented recycling scheme.

“I am confident that Sunshine Coast residents will get behind this soft plastics recycling trial when it gets going in the region.”

Quotes attributable to Soft Plastic Stewardship Australia Interim Co-CEO Barry Cosier:

“This funding represents a significant step forward for Queensland’s recycling efforts, enabling trials in communities across the state to actively contribute to reducing soft plastic waste,” he said.

“These trial hubs will help the Soft Plastic Stewardship Australia understand the best solutions for both urban and remote regions, making soft plastic recycling more accessible for everyone.

“We are excited to see how these hubs will perform across different communities in Queensland.

“It’s crucial to find a solution for soft plastic recycling methods that work for key urban centres as well as regional and remote areas, ensuring that all Queenslanders have the opportunity to participate in sustainable waste management.

“This trial supported by the Queensland Government will allow us to explore how soft plastics can be repurposed into products that serve a meaningful purpose in the marketplace, creating a circular economy that supports environmental sustainability while driving local innovation.”

Further information:

The project is funded through the Queensland Government's Recycling and Jobs Fund.

Local residents in each hub community will see promotion of the collection options available to them locally. Information will also be provided on the Australian Food and Grocery Council website, and through participating councils.

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