

ACCC Application Summary:

Soft Plastic Stewardship Australia Limited

Who is Soft Plastic Stewardship Australia (SPSA)

Soft Plastic Stewardship Australia Limited (SPSA) is an independent, not-for-profit entity established on 6 August 2024. Its primary mission is to develop and manage a national, voluntary, industry-led product stewardship scheme for recycling used soft plastic packaging materials. SPSA aims to create a unified and effective approach to soft plastics recycling, building on existing initiatives and addressing the critical need for a circular economy in this sector.

The SPSA board currently includes representatives from brand owners and retailers, reflecting a collaborative industry effort. To ensure balanced governance, SPSA is actively working to appoint independent directors, as well as representatives from industry associations and/or small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs). This diverse board structure is designed to provide comprehensive oversight and strategic direction.

Additionally, SPSA will establish a Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC) comprising a broad range of stakeholders, such as recyclers, processors, government agencies, environmental non-governmental organisations, consumer groups, academics, and independent experts. The SAC will offer crucial guidance and insights to SPSA, ensuring the scheme's effectiveness and consideration of diverse perspectives.



SPSA's Aims and Objectives:

SPSA's overarching mission is to transform Australia's soft plastics recycling landscape by:

- 1** **Creating a Sustainable Circular Economy:** Establishing a circular value-chain where soft plastics are collected, recycled and reintroduced into the manufacturing process, minimising waste.
- 2** **Reducing Environmental Impact:** Decreasing the volume of soft plastics than end up in landfill and the environment, thereby mitigating environmental pollution.
- 3** **Encouraging Robust Onshore Recycling Capacity:** Driving investment in and developing domestic infrastructure to handle the processing and recycling of soft plastics, reducing reliance on overseas solutions.
- 4** **Driving Systemic Change:** Implementing a comprehensive and scalable scheme that fosters collaboration among all stakeholders, leading to long-term improvements across the recycling industry.
- 5** **Improving Recycling:** Increasing household and industry recycling and contributing to Australia's broader sustainability goals.
- 6** **Establishing an Effective Soft Plastics Recycling Scheme:** Creating a unified scheme with broad industry participation that provides a clear pathway for all parties to participate in.





Application for ACCC authorisation

SPSA is seeking authorisation for the following proposed conduct:

- **Levy Implementation:** Setting a levy on soft plastics placed on market by scheme participants to fund the scheme. Scheme participants may choose to pass on the levy as part of their product pricing, but are not required to.
- **Membership Terms and Conditions:** Developing and setting membership terms and conditions for all participants in the scheme.
- **Transition Agreements:** Establishing agreements with the Soft Plastics Taskforce and the AFGC to seamlessly transition and expand existing recycling programs.
- **Information Sharing:** Sharing operational information and data with the Soft Plastics Taskforce or AFGC to facilitate the transition of existing arrangements.
- **Service Procurement:** Arranging and acquiring services and entering into contracts for the collection, sorting, processing, and recycling of used soft plastics and any other associated third-party logistics services.

SPSA will continue to engage with the ACCC throughout the authorisation process. A final determination is expected around September 2025, and SPSA is hopeful of receiving interim authorisation for certain activities sooner.



Public Benefits

The SPSA-led scheme will give rise to significant public benefits, including:

- **Environmental Benefits:** Diverting significant volumes of soft plastics from landfill and the environment, reducing pollution, and transforming waste into valuable resources.
- **Industry Development:** Fostering innovation, creating new markets for recycled soft plastics, and stimulating growth in the recycling sector.
- **Job Creation:** Generating employment opportunities in the collection, processing, and recycling of soft plastics.
- **Timely and Effective Solutions:** Developing and implementing efficient solutions to address the challenges of soft plastics recycling.
- **Community Awareness:** Raising public awareness about the importance of soft plastics recycling and addressing concerns about legacy stockpiles.
- **Scalable Impact:** Achieving widespread participation from small, medium and large consumer brands and retailers, maximising environmental benefits.
- **Policy Alignment:** Aligned with government policies and initiatives aimed at improving waste management and recycling.
- **International Alignment:** Aligning Australia with global best practices in waste recovery and circular economy initiatives.





Next Steps

SPSA's proposed conduct is structured across three distinct phases, each designed to progressively build and implement the national scheme:



Interim Authorisation ~May 2025

SPSA is seeking interim authorisation to take over responsibility for the existing NPRS council kerbside pilots, including transferring arrangements to SPSA.

This phase would also see SPSA establish and start collecting the scheme levy. Data for the levy would be collected by a third-party under a 'black box' system. Scheme participants may choose to pass on the levy as part of their product pricing, but are not required to.

Draft Authorisation ~July 2025

At this point, SPSA is seeking authorisation to share operational information and data as required between SPSA and the Taskforce to allow SPSA to prepare for the transition of the ongoing instore collections program.

SPSA would begin preparation for the procurement process by issuing the RFI and, subsequently, the RFP. SPSA will not enter into final agreements with service providers under this process until final authorisation.

Final Authorisation ~September 2025

If authorisation is granted by the ACCC, the final phase will see the full implementation of the national soft plastics recycling scheme, with all operational aspects in place.

Transition Agreements: SPSA would establish agreements with the Soft Plastics Taskforce to seamlessly transition and expand the remaining existing recycling collection programs

Service Procurement: SPSA would conduct a procurement phase, acquiring services and entering into contracts for the collection, sorting, processing and recycling of used soft plastics, and any other associated third party services such as logistics.



EXCLUSION

REDcycle
stockpile
processing &
liability

Term: 8yrs to increase investment confidence





SOFT PLASTIC STEWARDSHIP AUSTRALIA

Our application to the ACCC is currently open for submissions from the public. You can show your support for Australia's soft plastic recycling by making a submission here:

ACCC

If you need further information or advice to help inform your submission to the ACCC, you can email us here:

info@spsa.au

Whilst awaiting the ACCC's determination, SPSA will continue to consult with stakeholders to gather valuable insights on the effective execution of the scheme.