



MEDIA RELEASE

New Recycling Innovation Infrastructure Boosts National Supply Chain Resilience – Now is the Time to Feed It!

Proven recycling infrastructure now needs feeding – Australia’s community challenge

Soft Plastic Stewardship Australia (SPSA) today highlighted the successful commissioning of innovative, Australian-designed recycling infrastructure that delivers a proven, scalable, and commercially viable pathway for soft plastics, and is now launching a three-month community challenge to dramatically increase soft plastics returns.

As Australians gear up for the World Cup match this Saturday, supercharged AFL rounds, and State of Origin clashes, we’re expecting a surge in chip packets, confectionery wrappers and other soft plastics. This is the perfect moment to turn your game-day snacks into game-changing recycling and bring them back to your local store!

This is your moment to make a difference. Over the next three months, SPSA is calling on Australians to return more soft plastics to their local stores and use the [SPSA location tracker](#) to easily locate the nearest drop-off point.

This marks a pivotal moment, preventing thousands of tonnes of material going to landfill and demonstrating that Australia has a proven, scalable and commercially viable recycling pathway.

SPSA CEO Barry Cosier said the milestone highlights the economic imperative for packaging reform and urged the community to act.

“We’re calling on all Australians to bring their confectionery wrappers, chip packets, frozen vegetable packets, bread bags, pasta packets, biscuit wrappers, and other clean, dry soft plastics back to participating stores over the next three months. The new recycling capacity is equivalent to saving 100,000-150,000 barrels of oil per year, reducing Australia’s exposure to current global oil and virgin resin price volatility - a key driver of packaging costs,” Mr Cosier said.

Australians consume around 300,000 tonnes of imported soft plastic packaging every year, conservatively valued at over \$500 million with a further disposal cost to landfill of \$100 million.

“We import material with real commercial value, use it once, and weeks later it’s a near-worthless waste stream the community pays again to landfill. That’s valuable in, worthless out, then pay to dump it.

“Waste is simply uneconomic and adding to the cost of living. Recycling keeps value in Australia and reduces long-term costs for households and industry”, Mr Cosier said.

In 2024, with support from the Recycling Modernisation Fund (state and federally funded), the Soft Plastics Taskforce and private investment, iQRenew commissioned its Soft Plastic Engineered Commodity (SPEC) facility in Taree, NSW.

iQRenew CEO Danial Gallagher said the facility is delivering on its promise, demonstrating that innovation in regional Australia can deliver global standard recycling technology and support domestic manufacturing.

“With government and supermarket support, we have designed, built, and now operate a world leading soft plastic recycling facility and are now producing high-quality recycled pellets for food grade packaging, rigid bottles, saveBOARD panelling and timber replacement products.

“The technology has been operating since 2024. The technology is proven. Now it needs feeding.”



SPSA Director and Nestlé Oceania General Manager Confectionary & Snacks, Andrew Lawrey said recycled soft plastic resin is critical to Australia's food and grocery supply chain.

"Recycling soft plastics isn't just good for the environment - it's economically smart. Recycled resin reduces reliance on imported virgin plastics, frees up global capacity for food grade packaging and strengthens Australia's food security. This is exactly the kind of sovereign capability that Future Made in Australia is designed to support."

Recent research shows 94% of Australians support convenient soft plastic recycling, with SPSA planning to expand beyond the current 700 collection points and increase kerbside bag-in-bin collections.

"Collection expansion can accelerate through greater regulatory certainty including a mandate from Government around producer responsibility and recycled content," Mr Cosier said.

Now is the time to expand collections. Over the coming three months, SPSA urges all Australians to return more soft plastics to participating stores and use the SPSA website to find your nearest drop-off location. A stable supply of feedstock is essential for the SPEC facility and other emerging recyclers, in partnership with scheme participants, retailers and councils.

Globally, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes have proven to drive both economic productivity and supply chain resilience.

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For further information or images, please contact bonnie.marshall@spsa.au or on 0435 790 925.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Soft Plastics Stewardship Australia:

- Backed by around 40 of Australia's leading brands and retailers, SPSA is an industry-led, not-for-profit initiative which is building a national recycling system that expands infrastructure, simplifies recycling for customers, and grows demand for recycled soft plastics products.

Additional quotes:

- iQRenew Chief Executive Officer, Danial Gallagher said: "With the support of brands, retailers and the NSW Government, we have been able to set up a Soft Plastic Engineered Commodity (SPEC) facility in Taree, NSW creating more than 30 new jobs to produce plastic pellets with Global Recycling Standards certification. With the ability to recycle more soft plastic packaging we look forward to more brands and retailers supporting SPSA and Australians dropping off their soft plastics at their local supermarket."