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National Soft Plastics Summit: Producers and Retailers urged to fastrack solution

The Boomerang Alliance has today challenged the packaging industry to take full responsibility, implement effective collections and pay for the costs of soft plastic waste and pollution.

“With the National Soft Plastics Summit being held in Canberra today, we urge the industry to turn talk into action and adopt a best practice solution. The industry has failed with past efforts and we are campaigning to make sure, this time, government and industry implement a forceful, regulated scheme to stop the waste and plastic pollution”, said Jeff Angel, Director of Boomerang Alliance, Australia’s leading waste & pollution NGO representing 55 groups.

The Boomerang Alliance is representing the community and 55 allies at the National Soft Plastics Summit in Canberra. Director Jeff Angel is available for interviews - 0418273773.

“The key to addressing the soft plastic crisis is for producers to drastically reduce the amount of raw materials used and to close the loop, keeping these materials out of landfill and our environment”, says Angel.

“That means taking a circular economy approach involving the whole supply chain, with producers directly accountable for meeting stringent reduction, recovery and recycled content targets.”

“The container refund schemes now active across Australia, are successful examples of a circular economy approach where producers (in this case the beverage industry) are responsible for the full costs associated with the recovery of their products. We need the same approach for soft plastics.”

An estimated 150,000 tonnes of soft plastics are used by Australian households every year. REDcycle only collected 7000 tonnes (5%) while the scheme was up and running, with the remainder going to landfill or litter in the environment.

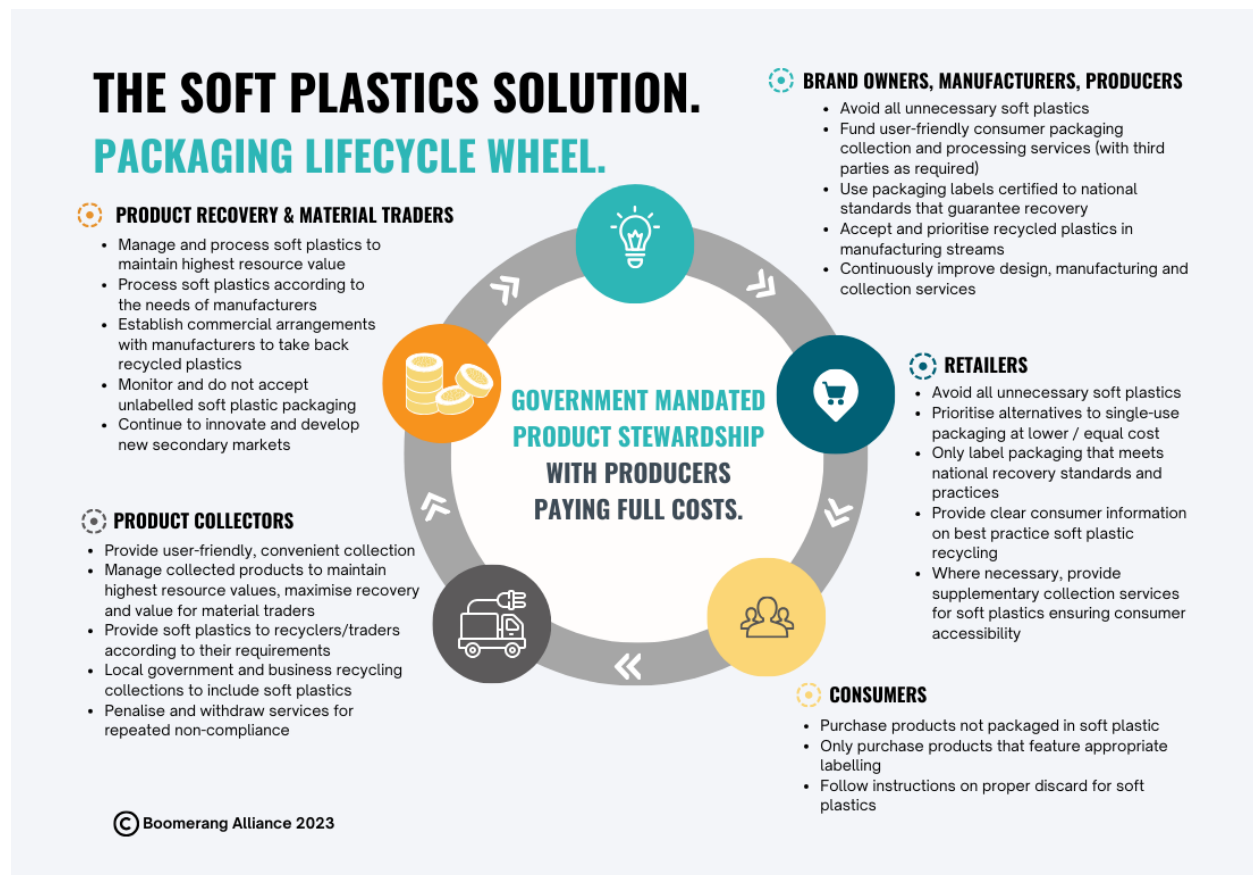
“The Boomerang Alliance calls for the immediate mandated resumption of user-friendly household collections and the phasing-in of collections for all businesses, with a guarantee that all soft plastics are recycled in practice. That is what Australian consumers and businesses want”, added Angel.

Last week, the Boomerang Alliance released its Product Stewardship Model for Packaging, putting forward a national solution to solve the packaging crisis, based on international best practice. The model identifies 10 key principles that need to be included in a mandatory national product stewardship scheme. It outlines the reform required to turn the tide on plastic, prominently featuring extended producer responsibility which shifts costs from taxpayers and local government to packaging producers and manufacturers.

In addition to full producer responsibility, the scheme proposes new stringent packaging standards including the requirement that packaging is recovered in practice and at scale domestically, rather than reinstating waste exports. The scheme would be harmonised nationally with support by all State and

Territory Governments and managed by a national body with authority and accountability to the Commonwealth, with mandatory targets and penalties for non-compliance.

“Australians consume more single use plastic per capita than any other country in the world (apart from Singapore)¹. Surely we can do better! For too long have we been relying on industry goodwill. We now need to provide clear expectations, certainty and a level playing field to turn off the plastic tap. This is what our proposed product stewardship model will achieve.”



¹ [Minderoo Foundation 'Plastic Wastemaker Index'](#).