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SOFT PLASTICS RECOVERY AND RECYCLING TAKES FIRST STEPS

The Boomerang Alliance has cautiously welcomed the progress report released at the recent National Soft Plastics Summit.

“The plans developed by the Food and Grocery Council are beginning to open the doors to a potential scheme for producer responsibility. An important advance are the promising results of trials using local government kerbside collections. These trials recognise the need for manufacturer financial contributions, an essential component of product stewardship.”

“However, a lot more will need to be put in place, if the soft plastics problem is to be solved”, said Jeff Angel, Director of the Alliance of 55 groups.

“Manufacturers taking full responsibility for recovery costs is an essential principle of an effective Product Stewardship Scheme. The next step is to recognise that manufacturer responsibility must be extended to covering the costs of packaging, through its entire lifecycle.”

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

“Currently virtually all of the estimated 150,000 tonnes of household soft plastic waste generated in Australia is going to landfill, because there is no collection for recycling. Putting an effective collection and reprocessing service in place with mandatory targets for reduction, reuse, recycling, and alternative materials, is urgently needed,” said Mr Angel.

The Boomerang Alliance model (below) for soft plastics spells out the actions required throughout a soft plastics lifecycle.

Further information: Jeff Angel, 0418 273773

THE SOFT PLASTICS SOLUTION.

PACKAGING LIFECYCLE WHEEL.

PRODUCT RECOVERY & MATERIAL TRADERS

- Manage and process soft plastics to maintain highest resource value
- Process soft plastics according to the needs of manufacturers
- Establish commercial arrangements with manufacturers to take back recycled plastics
- Monitor and do not accept unlabelled soft plastic packaging
- Continue to innovate and develop new secondary markets

PRODUCT COLLECTORS

- Provide user-friendly, convenient collection
- Manage collected products to maintain highest resource values, maximise recovery and value for material traders
- Provide soft plastics to recyclers/traders according to their requirements
- Local government and business recycling collections to include soft plastics
- Penalise and withdraw services for repeated non-compliance

BRAND OWNERS, MANUFACTURERS, PRODUCERS

- Avoid all unnecessary soft plastics
- Fund user-friendly consumer packaging collection and processing services (with third parties as required)
- Use packaging labels certified to national standards that guarantee recovery
- Accept and prioritise recycled plastics in manufacturing streams
- Continuously improve design, manufacturing and collection services

RETAILERS

- Avoid all unnecessary soft plastics
- Prioritise alternatives to single-use packaging at lower / equal cost
- Only label packaging that meets national recovery standards and practices
- Provide clear consumer information on best practice soft plastic recycling
- Where necessary, provide supplementary collection services for soft plastics ensuring consumer accessibility

CONSUMERS

- Purchase products not packaged in soft plastic
- Only purchase products that feature appropriate labelling
- Follow instructions on proper discard for soft plastics

