

THE ICONIC

Delivering on Recycled Content

For those who dabble in the world of online retail you'll be familiar with the thrill of waiting for your goods to arrive. And in May 2020, the switch from black to white delivery satchels wasn't the only change made for shoppers of leading online retailer, THE ICONIC. Behind the switch was the brand's industry leading transition to delivery satchels made from 100% post-consumer plastic waste. Through this transition, THE ICONIC estimates they will be able to recycle and reintroduce into the market roughly 60 tonnes of plastic every year. That means 60 tonnes less single-use virgin plastics being produced and ultimately sent to landfill.

Choosing recycled content

When starting research into sustainable delivery satchel alternatives, THE ICONIC Packaging Project team analysed a range of options from paper envelopes to cardboard boxes and certified home-compostable satchels. Conducting complete order fulfilment, delivery and return trials, the technical reliability and efficiency of flexible packaging brought the decision down to two options: recycled or compostable plastic. Reflecting the brands inherent belief that "the entire lifecycle of any product is the only way to understand its footprint," recoverability for THE ICONIC was deemed as important as material composition. With end-of-life recovery a critical component of the rigorous sustainability assessment for the new satchel, THE ICONIC research revealed mass access to both home composting facilities and consolidated communal compost

disposal channels as being inaccessible for the majority of Australian and New Zealand (ANZ) customers.

This meant using compostable plastic posed the serious risk of producing "waste to landfill where the satchels would not have the correct conditions to compost; or worse, satchels entering and contaminating soft plastic recycling streams".

Partnering with REDcycle and running rigorous recyclability assessments through the Packaging Recyclability Evaluation Portal (PREP), accessible through APCO Membership, THE ICONIC Packaging Project team made the final decision to support a shift to a circular materials economy and make the switch to satchels containing 100% post-consumer recycled plastic.



APCO CASE STUDY: THE ICONIC

Supporting Australia's circular economy

"Recycled plastic has the great benefit of being a real driver to the circular economy."

THE ICONIC is leading the charge for Australia's transition to a circular packaging economy.

By purchasing products with post-consumer recycled content, THE ICONIC is increasing market demand for reprocessed materials. Reintroducing existing materials means supporting local recycling infrastructures and avoiding the depletion of resources. It's an approach supported by both industry and government, while creating a local market for recycled content is a critical component in driving demand and reducing cost for materials processing in Australia.

As the first major ANZ retailer to make the move to 100% recycled content delivery satchels, THE ICONIC are ahead in reaching one of the 2025 National Packaging Targets that calls for an average of 50% recycled content across all packaging. THE ICONIC have also committed to increasing the use of



on-pack sustainability and disposal information, as well as recycled content in its private label paper and cardboard packaging (80%), and polybags (>70%). The organisation has also committed to reaching 100% recyclability in their private labels' primary packaging.

Maximising APCO Membership

"Without a packaging technologist role in our business, it was really important for us to have access to APCO resources and guides on materials and sustainability."

As APCO Members, THE ICONIC tapped into available resources and tools to assist in their sustainable packaging solutions. The team used material guides to understand the status of recoverability and processing of materials in the market.

"We also used PREP to assess the recyclability of different types of satchels which ultimately gave us confidence on customers' accessibility of a recycling system for our 100% recycled content solution."

Embracing consumer demand

With packaging a key focus within THE ICONIC's sustainability strategy, the move marks the first of five sustainable packaging targets THE ICONIC has committed to achieve by 2022. Not only operationally fundamental for online businesses, THE ICONIC recognises that, in addition to its product assortment, "packaging represents an important tangible connection" between the brand and its customers.

APCO CASE STUDY: THE ICONIC

As a consistent trend within customer feedback “we knew packaging was one of the things many of our customers wanted us to find a more sustainable alternative for.”

When recycled content challenged THE ICONIC's traditional black satchel design, the team were confident their customers would understand that things needed to change to make progress towards a more sustainable alternative. Through a well-planned and delivered marketing campaign, the message behind the change to white and switch to 100% post-consumer plastic waste, reached over 7 million people, with the news further covered internationally. To date, customer sentiment to the transition has been highly positive and through its own progress, THE ICONIC hopes to encourage other large businesses to recognise their part in driving collective and actionable change.

More information

For more information about APCO visit
www.packagingcovenant.org.au

For more information on THE ICONIC's sustainability strategy visit
<https://www.theiconic.com.au/playbook/sustainability>

For more information of THE ICONIC's packaging journey visit
<https://www.theiconic.com.au/packaging/>

.....
DISCLAIMER: All rights reserved. No part of this case study may be reproduced in any material form or transmitted to any other person without the prior written permission of the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation Ltd. (APCO) except as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) (as amended) or unless expressly permitted in writing by APCO and all authorised material must at all times be acknowledged.

Share your story with APCO so we can pass your learnings on to other APCO Members.

Contact us on **02 8381 3700** or
apco@packagingcovenant.org