

APCO PRIORITY PROJECTS – FY21



What are APCO Priority Projects?

Developed to drive targeted progress towards the 2025 National Packaging Targets, the projects outlined below connect with all ‘Outcomes’ and ‘Strategies’ identified in Our Packaging Future, the framework for how Australia will deliver the 2025 Targets launched in March 2020.



**OUTCOME ONE
PACKAGING
DESIGNED FOR
CIRCULARITY**



**OUTCOME TWO
IMPROVED
COLLECTION
AND RECYCLING
SYSTEMS**



**OUTCOME THREE
EXPANDED
MARKETS
FOR USED
PACKAGING**

The program was developed in consultation with, and will be overseen by, APCO’s 2020 Working Groups – a community of 160 participants, representing the entire packaging supply chain. This year’s Working Groups, comprising National Packaging Targets Implementation, Design, Systems and Education, and Material Circularity, will each be responsible for advising and supporting the delivery of several projects structured across the next financial year. APCO will be seeking collaboration on this large portfolio of work from all key stakeholders in the value chain to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of the projects.

To view previous projects delivered through APCO Working Groups, please [click here](#).

How can you get involved?

If you are interested in directly contributing to or supporting the delivery of any of the below projects, APCO encourage you to reach out directly to the team by emailing us on apco@packagingcovenant.org.au.

To stay informed on the projects’ progress, we encourage all interested stakeholders to register for [APCO’s newsletter](#). Please also keep an eye out for project launches or releases throughout the year, as notified on the [APCO website](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

Summary of APCO Priority Projects – FY 21

Project	Description	Key 'Our Packaging Future' Strategy	Start period	APCO Working Group
REUSE				
PROJECT 1 REUSE ROADMAP	Build an evidence based business case and strategy for packaging reuse models. Map and quantify current flows of reusable packaging, research alternative models and identify priority opportunities.	1.3: Increase the proportion of reusable packaging	Q3 2020	National Packaging Targets Implementation
PROJECT 2 REUSE PILOT	Facilitate collaborative pilot projects to implement reuse in targeted supply chains.	1.3: Increase the proportion of reusable packaging	Q1 2021	National Packaging Targets Implementation
RECYCLING				
PROJECT 3 PACKAGING RECYCLABILITY RESEARCH	Research to inform packaging design for recyclability, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRF trials to investigate the fate of certain fiber- based, glass and small items of packaging • Development of a testing protocol to identify recyclability thresholds for fiber-based packaging, integrated into PREP 	1.4: Design for material recycling	Q4 2019	Design
PROJECT 4 DESIGN GUIDELINES	Develop four new design guidelines (Quickstart format) to support Sustainable Packaging Guide implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft plastics (building on CEFLEX) • Rigid plastics (PET complete - PP and HDPE) • Fiber based packaging/PCPB • Problematic small items 	1.4: Design for material recycling	Q2 2020	Design
PROJECT 5 BUSINESS TO BUSINESS (B2B) PACKAGING	Promote reduction, reuse and recycling of B2B packaging and assess the applicability of the ARL in the B2B stream.	2.4: Educate households and businesses to source separate effectively	Q3 2020	Systems and Education

Project	Description	Key 'Our Packaging Future' Strategy	Start period	APCO Working Group
PROJECT 6 STRATEGIES FOR RECYCLING SOFT PLASTICS	Research and trials to reduce waste and increase recycling of soft plastic packaging:	2.3: Improve the infrastructure for sortation and recycling	Q2 2020	Systems and Education
PROJECT 7 REMOTE AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP	Investigate opportunities for product stewardship models including trials. Address limited access to collection or drop-off collection systems in some remote and regional areas.	2.3: Improve the infrastructure for sortation and recycling 2.1: Standardise kerbside collection systems	Q2 2020	Systems and Education
COMPOSTING				
PROJECT 8 COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING POSITIONING PAPER	Joint positioning paper on compostable packaging with the Australian Bioplastics Association (ABA) and the Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA) to address industry and consumer confusion around suitable best-practice use of compostable packaging and other considerations.	1.5: Design for compostability where appropriate	Completed May 2020: View resource here	National Packaging Targets Implementation
PROJECT 9 NATIONAL COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING STRATEGY	Develop a national, long-term strategy for compostable packaging with key stakeholders (ABA & AORA) to provide a considered approach to integrating compostable packaging into the current system.	1.5: Design for compostability where appropriate	Q3 2020	National Packaging Targets Implementation
RECYCLED CONTENT				
PROJECT 10 RECYCLED CONTENT TRACEABILITY	This project aims to support industry and government confidence in recycled content products and packaging, produced in Australia or imported.	3.1: Increase recycled content in packaging	Q2 2020	Material Circularity

Project	Description	Key 'Our Packaging Future' Strategy	Start period	APCO Working Group
PROJECT 11 SPECIFICATIONS FOR RECYCLED MATERIALS	This project will develop a set of standard requirements for recycled materials in packaging, particularly plastics. The aim is to encourage companies in the packaging value chain to utilise more recycled materials in their packaging by building confidence that recycled materials can meet fit-for-purpose quality and colour requirements..	3.1: Increase recycled content in packaging 3.2: Increase use of recycled packaging materials in other products and civil construction	Q3 2020	Material Circularity
PROJECT 12 RECYCLED CONTENT GUIDELINES	Material-specific design guidelines to educate the packaging supply chain on using recycled content.	3.1: Increase recycled content in packaging	Q3 2020	Design
PROJECT 13 RECYCLED CONTENT LABELLING	Development of a labelling program to communicate recycled content	3.1: Increase recycled content in packaging	Q3 2020	Systems and Education
PROJECT 14 MEMBER PLEDGES	APCO will work with Members to publicly pledge volumes of recycled materials in packaging	3.1: Increase recycled content in packaging	Q2 2020	Material Circularity
PROJECT 15 SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT	Development of resources to support state and local government procurement of recycled content products and packaging	3.1: Increase recycled content in packaging 3.2: Increase use of recycled packaging materials in other products and civil construction	Q1 2020	Material Circularity

Project	Description	Key 'Our Packaging Future' Strategy	Start period	APCO Working Group
PHASE OUT				
PROJECT 16 STRATEGIES FOR PROBLEMATIC & UNNECESSARY, SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PACKAGING	Develop an action plan to phase out four priority plastic materials: Expanded polystyrene (EPS) food and beverage service containers, EPS packaging fill, fragmentable plastics and light weight bags. Research other materials under phase out consideration – PVC, PS, additives such as titanium dioxide and carbon black, and multi-material laminate plastics.	1.2: Phase out problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging	Q2 2020	Design
PROJECT 17 APPROACHES FOR NON RECYCLABLE PACKAGING	Research the 12% of packaging that is not currently recyclable and develop action plans to resolve barriers for each material and supply chain.	1.4: Design for material recycling	Q3 2020	National Packaging Targets Implementation
GENERAL				
PROJECT 18 ANNUAL MATERIAL FLOW ANALYSIS	Annual measurement of progress towards the National Packaging Targets. 2018/19 data collection with the addition of Business to Business packaging flows and reuse models. Updated Material Flow Analysis modelling to include 2018/19 data, B2B packaging flows and reuse.	4. Foundational: Measuring and Reporting Progress	Q1 2020	National Packaging Targets Implementation
PROJECT 19 CIRCULAR ECONOMY HUB	Support in collation of sustainable packaging data for CE Hub Marketplace	3.1: Increase recycled content in packaging 3.2: Increase use of recycled packaging materials in other products and civil construction	Q4 2020	Material Circularity

Project	Description	Key 'Our Packaging Future' Strategy	Start period	APCO Working Group
PROJECT 20 SECTOR APPROACHES	APCO to support specific sectors with priority packaging projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenlife – support expansion of PP closed loop collection and recycling program • Support for the medical/dental industry to reduce single use plastics and identify reuse or closed loop models • Dairy industry 	2.2: Expand drop-off and take back systems for packaging 3.1: Increase recycled content in packaging	Q4 2019	Specific sector groups
PROJECT 21 CIRCULAR PLASTICS RECYCLING INITIATIVE	Collaboration of key universities to research, develop and prioritise projects that will drive increased innovation for plastics in the circular economy	1.1: Reduce packaging through design and innovation	Q1 2020	Material Circularity

Other APCO activities:

In parallel, APCO will also be delivering several key programs to drive ongoing progress towards the 2025 Targets, including:

- **The Australasian Recycling Label (ARL) program**

The ARL Program is a national recycling behaviour change program launched in 2018. The ARL Program consists of two components - PREP which assists brand owners to design packaging that is recyclable at end-of-life, and the Australasian Recycling Label (ARL), an evidence-based, on pack labelling scheme that clearly shows consumers how to correctly recycle packaging. As a consumer engagement and education tool, the ARL Program drives two important environmental outcomes - greater packaging recyclability at the design phase, and more accurate recycling behaviours from the general public. Effective delivery of the campaign requires a two-pronged approach – industry engagement and consumer education.

The program aims to increase recycling and recovery rates and contribute to cleaner recycling streams. The ARL is the only evidence-based labelling system on the market and is powered by the Packaging Recyclability Evaluation Portal (PREP), an online tool that assesses packaging recyclability in the Australian and New Zealand recovery systems. Supported by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and a Marketing Advisory Committee (MAC), the program is now supported by over 380 APCO Members. Read more on [APCO's website](#) or [ARL.org.au](#)

- **National Consumer Education for Sustainable Packaging**

With the support of the Federal Government's Environmental Restoration Fund this program will deliver a consistent approach to consumer education on reducing, reusing and recycling packaging. It will also increase awareness of sustainable packaging options and educate consumers on the purpose/benefits of packaging, recycled content and how to consume responsibly and sustainably.

A national approach to consumer education and engagement on reducing, reusing and recycling packaging is fundamental to achieving increased recycling rates and reduced contamination in recycling and composting systems. The Australasian Recycling Label Program (the ARL Program) is the flagship consumer education program and therefore the campaign will focus heavily on this program to kick-start the national conversation about the importance of recycling and how to 'recycle right'. This activity will be supplemented by messaging that educates consumers about how to engage in responsible consumption (including reuse) and demonstrates the life cycle impacts of sustainable packaging in relation to food waste.

Details on APCO Priority Projects for FY21

Projects 1 and 2. Reuse Roadmap and Pilot

Summary

Reuse is an important part of the waste hierarchy and a core aspect of the circular economy. Although there are some re-use packaging models in the Australian business to business (B2B) and customer facing markets, this is an area that requires much greater focus.

The aim of this project is to understand where and how successful reuse packaging models can be rolled out across the packaging ecosystem. The first project will focus on understanding current local and international reusable packaging models (both B2B and customer facing) and setting a baseline framework for tracking reuse models in the Australian market. The mapped reusable material flows and analysis will inform a strategy and support identification of items which adapt best to the reuse model. The second project will develop pilot projects to serve as case study examples of successful reusable packaging models.

Objectives

- Support the implementation of new and expanded reuse models in Australia
- Build an evidence based business case for reuse packaging models to identify opportunities and drive greater uptake of reusable packaging
- Promote best practice models and case studies from Australia and internationally, to stimulate knowledge sharing and increased adoption of reuse business models in Australia
- Develop a high level strategy for reusable packaging to provide a central source of knowledge and guidance for the packaging industry, and encourage innovation.

Deliverables

Project 1 will create a strategy/roadmap to encourage the increased proportion of reusable packaging in Australia, which will contain:

- Reusable packaging material flow tracking and analysis – A combination of data from Project 18 - Material Flow Analysis - additional examples and data from current flows of reusable packaging models in Australia. This report will deliver an agreed method for tracking reuse models to allow comparison across different models (based on international approaches and current data available to help monitor progress towards the 2025 Targets).
- Analysis of select models – a SWOT (or similar) analysis report of some select current Australian reusable packaging models including both B2C and B2B. This will seek to identify key traits of the business model, communications, strategies and applications, to share learnings and develop the business case.
- Case studies to showcase the progress already made (locally and internationally) and to highlight the business cases in these opportunities.
- Additional insight into the business case for increasing the proportion of reusable packaging in Australia. This will include the identification of sectors or applications where the evidence

and analysis suggests it is beneficial to do so.

- APCO will then seek to identify organisations that are motivated to move to reuse models.

Project 2 will facilitate collaborative partnerships with organisations that agree to pilot reusable packaging for their product or supply chain. APCO will not fund pilots and will support with industry/government connections and learnings from analysis.

Project 3. Packaging Recyclability Research

Summary

For APCO to continue to provide accurate design advice to its Members, additional research is required on packaging recyclability, specifically to provide additional granularity on local market conditions relevant to recycling. This also supports greater engagement and relationships with the waste and recycling sectors to facilitate ongoing open dialogue on packaging recyclability.

Two areas were identified as priorities for further research in 2019 for ongoing delivery in 2020:

1. **MRF Trials:** Trials will be undertaken to determine the ability for selective packaging materials to be correctly sorted and recovered through Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). This will be done in consultation with the waste and recycling sector to identify any issues that prevent particular items from being effectively separated and recovered. A trial method will be established and the outputs of the testing will inform PREP recyclability thresholds and design guidelines
2. **Pulpability Testing:** As plastics continue to be seen as problematic, we are seeing an industry shift into fibre packaging alternatives. The introduction of new packaging formats to suit new functionalities is a concern for the fiber recycling industry (mixed paper). To exacerbate this concern, there is limited visibility of the requirements for fibre recovery and a lack of guidance per packaging item on designing for recycling. APCO seeks to bridge this information gap by developing a pulpability testing protocol and completing a series of tests to establish design guidance on fibre based packaging.

Objectives

- To engage with the recycling sector, including specifically the paper mills, to reach agreement on how to improve the recyclability of specific problematic packaging formats through changes in packaging design or sorting processes.
- To provide more detailed and evidenced guidelines to Members for designing for recyclability

Deliverables

1. MRF Trials:

- MRF trial methodology
- 2 x MRF trials – to test
 - Glass losses from labelling - label material type and size

- PCPB correct sorting into paper stream – 3D shape and size, and weight
- Small items calculated in glass stream to understand minimum dimensions.
- Trial results report to analyse results and propose recommendations to the Technical Advisory Committee to review and potentially amend PREP thresholds for glass, PCPB and minimum size. Stakeholder agreement on the issues and therefore parameters and thresholds that affect recyclability (material sorting in MRFs), specifically for glass, PCPB and small items.
- Outputs to inform the deliverables of Project 4 Design Guidelines, including glass and fibre based packaging.

2. Pulpability Testing:

- Establish an agreed industry threshold for pulpability to inform design for recycling for fibre-based packaging. Reach industry agreement on a technical standard or assessment methodology to verify the recyclability of fibre-based packaging.
- Gain an increased understanding of the impacts of polymer linings, wet strength, etc. have on paper/cardboard recycling to develop updated thresholds/proxies for PREP.
- Outputs to inform the deliverables of Project 4 – Design Guidelines for fibre based packaging

Project 4. Design Guidelines

Summary

Designing packaging for reuse and recyclability is fundamental to achieving the 2025 National Packaging Targets (2025 Targets) and transitioning to a circular economy. *Our Packaging Future* outlines the importance of designing packaging with consumption and end-of-life in mind. APCO supports brands and packaging manufacturers to make informed packaging decisions with design guidelines that provide specific information on material types and formats.

Objectives

- Provide Members with additional resources to support implementation of the 10 Sustainable Packaging Principles of the SPGs.
- Provide targeted advice on specific materials to improve design for recovery

Deliverables

Five new 'Quickstart' design guideline documents:

1. Soft plastics (building on CEFLEX 2020 release, and earlier draft prepared by the 2019 Design Working Group)
2. Rigid PP
3. Rigid HDPE
4. Fibre based packaging/PCPB (building on earlier draft prepared by the 2019 Design Working Group)
5. Problematic small items – What's not recyclable

Project 5. Business to Business Packaging

Summary

Achieving the 2025 National Packaging Targets requires a collective, systems wide approach. The area of the supply chain that exhibits significant potential for increased reuse or recovery is business-2-business (B2B) packaging. It is one of the largest contributors to waste packaging and presents challenges in collection and education. As highlighted in *Our Packaging Future*, 'around 550,000 tonnes of corrugated cardboard, for example, was disposed directly to landfill in 2017-18, despite it being recyclable and an important source of revenue when available as a clean stream', this loss is mostly attributed to the C&I space. Challenges include inconsistencies in collection access and high costs for separate recycling collections in comparison to waste disposal.

There is a need for increased industry awareness, education and responsibility regarding the benefits and importance of B2B packaging recovery. This project will focus on investigating the opportunities to increase recovery and educate the supply chain. The Australasian Recycling Label (ARL) program has the potential to support increased recycling of the C&I material streams.

Objectives

The objectives of this project are to:

- Expand the ARL program to support the recovery of B2B packaging
- Highlight opportunities to streamline and accelerate B2B packaging collection and recycling.

Deliverables

1. This project will deliver a scope for application of the ARL to B2B packaging through:
 - Material Flow Analysis – Project 18 will collect data on the flow of materials through the system. This project will use the list of common B2B packaging formats (ANZSIC codes) developed for the 2018-19 MFA to determine which formats are recyclable (widely available collection system, technically recyclable and viable end markets)
 - Analysis of data, in consultation with industry, to identify the key challenges and opportunities with B2B packaging formats/materials.
 - Program proposal for the expansion of the ARL to B2B packaging
 - Pilot project to trial the ARL on specific B2B packaging materials in specific sectors to determine effectiveness of the ARL as an education tool in the Commercial and Industrial (C&I) space.
 - Measure and publish the success of the trials to guide the uptake of the ARL on B2B packaging
2. Roll out of the ARL program for B2B packaging applications.

Project 6. Strategies for Recycling Soft Plastics

Summary

Improving the collection and recycling of soft plastics is one of the three key activities outlined in *Our*

Packaging Future (strategy 2.3). As of 2017/18 at least 350,000 tonnes of soft plastics were placed onto the market and only 8% was recycled (C&I and consumer). Some programs have been effective in collecting and recycling soft plastics (REDcycle), however volumes are still low. The greatest volume opportunities lie in the collection and recycling of clean LDPE soft plastic found in the B2B space (e.g. stretch wrap).

This project will investigate current processes in Australia and research global best practice to devise strategies to improve the recovery for both B2B and consumer soft plastic packaging. Ensuring that 100% of soft plastics are reusable, recyclable or compostable represent a key challenge, and this project seeks to find the best strategies to successfully achieve the 2025 Targets.

Objectives

- Develop a shared understanding of the most feasible options to increase collection and recycling systems for soft plastics
- Identify changes to use and design to enable reduction and better recovery.
- Identify key end markets and how these can be expanded to increase circular recovery.

Deliverables

1. Maps of all key soft plastic supply chains
2. Report on opportunities and potential strategies to shift design, collection, recycling and end markets - including analysis of local and international options for recovery of each key soft plastic supply chain and expanded recovery identified
3. Report on opportunities to promote regional collection and recycling of soft plastics through expansion of the regional model for soft plastics (National Waste Policy Action Plan strategy 3.14 for APCO implementation) – Project 7 Remote and regional partnership
4. Pilot projects to test effectiveness of strategies to increase recovery or reduce use.

Projects 7. Remote and Regional Partnership

Summary

This project will build on progress made in discussions with product stewardship organisations and other stakeholders in 2019, including at the NT Local Government Waste Symposium, towards the establishment of a partnership approach to delivering product stewardship outcomes in remote and regional areas of Australia.

Objectives

- Establish a collaborative pathway to implement National Waste Policy Action Plan tasks supporting all communities having access to waste management and processing, including:
 - NWP Action 3.14: Report on opportunities to promote regional collection and recycling of soft plastics through expansion of the Regional Model for Soft Plastics; and
 - NWP Action 3.15: Develop shared infrastructure and collection processes for packaging waste in remote and regional areas through the Remote and Regional

Waste Collection Partnership.

- Ensure that remote and regional areas share in the benefit from the sustainable packaging outcomes being delivered under the Australian Packaging Covenant.

Deliverables

1. A report identifying options for collection and processing of packaging and other plastic waste in remote and regional areas.
2. A national workshop of interested stakeholders in Northern Australia in early 2021.
3. A detailed implementation strategy for actions 3.14 and 3.15.
4. Partnership-based pilot and research projects, including:
 - **Tranche 1:** delivered with funding support from the Australian Government through the National Environmental Science Program and Regional Development Australia
 - **Tranche 2:** delivered through subsequent funding and partnership arrangements.

Project 8. Compostable Packaging Positioning Paper

Completed May 2020: [View resource here - 'Considerations for Compostable Plastic Packaging'](#)

Project 9. National Compostable Packaging Strategy

Summary

The aim of this project is to facilitate and develop a clear national strategy for the use and recovery of compostable packaging to 2025.

It will be informed by research, data and consultation with key stakeholders in Australia and overseas. The strategy development process will aim to gain agreement amongst key stakeholders on key elements in the strategy.

Objectives

- Provide clarity and strategic direction on the use and recovery of compostable packaging in Australia
- Bring together key stakeholders to reach agreement on proposed strategic actions required from all stakeholders to optimise the use and recovery of compostable packaging

Deliverables

1. A national strategy to guide the use and recovery of compostable packaging in Australia (plastics and fibre)

Project 10. Recycled Content Traceability

Summary

Brand Owners and manufacturers have expressed a requirement for support to understand the origins and quality of the recycled materials they are using. International supply chains increase the uncertainties and barriers to incorporating recycled content. Governments currently face the same challenges in tracing recycled content in products and packaging.

Greater transparency over the source of recycled material builds confidence in its quality for integration into packaging, to educate consumers and influence their purchasing behaviours.

This project aims to support industry and government confidence in recycled content products and packaging, produced in Australia or imported.

Objectives

There is currently no widely available, recognised system in place to determine the source or the type of recycled content being produced in the Australian market or imported. This project will:

- Develop a process for Brand Owners and governments to identify the recycled content within packaging
- Increase confidence in local/imported recycled content through robust traceability
- Aid governments in achieving the National Waste Policy's targets to procure recycled materials and packaging
- Support Industry to increase recycled content in packaging to 50% by 2025
- Underpin the new recycled content labelling program and the Circular Economy Hub Marketplace.

Deliverables

1. Establish an agreed/accepted process by which Brand Owners and governments are able to trace the source of recycled material in procured packaging
2. Identify providers and key criteria for activities related to verification of recycled content
3. This program will underpin the Recycled Content Labelling Program (Project 13)

Project 11. Specifications for Recycled Materials

Summary

This project will develop a set of standard requirements for recycled materials in packaging, particularly plastics. The aim is to encourage companies in the packaging value chain to utilise more recycled materials in their packaging by building confidence that recycled materials can meet fit-for-purpose quality and colour requirements. It links to other APCO projects, particularly:

- Project 10 – Recycled Material Traceability
- Project 12 – Recycled Content Packaging Guidelines
- Project 14 – Member Pledges

This project will feed also into a broader project being developed by the National Waste and Recycling Industry Council (NWRIC) to develop national recovered material specifications for a wide range of materials and applications.

Objectives

- Facilitate engagement between raw material suppliers, packaging manufacturers, brand owners and recyclers on matching supply and demand for recycled materials in packaging
- Reach agreement on standard requirements for recycled materials in packaging (with a particular focus on plastics and food contact applications), considering both current capacity and likely future developments
- Encourage brand owners to modify their specifications where possible to incorporate a higher percentage of recycled material
- Provide a clear market signal to the waste and recycling industry that brand owners and packaging suppliers will utilise recycled material that meets their performance requirements

Deliverables

1. A set of specifications (standards) for recycled materials suitable for packaging manufacture

Project 12. Recycled Content Guidelines

Summary

This project aims to support brands and packaging manufacturers to increase uptake of recycled content in packaging by providing guidance on the key considerations for incorporating recycled content material. The guideline address material type, quality, applications and standards to develop the packaging industry's understanding of opportunities and considerations when integrating recycled content in packaging. This work will be supported by the findings from Project 10, focused on the traceability of recycled content.

Objectives

- Support APCO Members to increase their uptake of recycled content material in packaging to drive progress towards the 50% average recycled content Target.
- Strengthen end markets for recycle.

Deliverables

1. A design guideline for recycled content packaging that will include:
 - All major material streams – Plastics (PET, HPDE, PP & films), paperboard, cardboard, glass, aluminium, steel.
 - Specific and practical guidance on topics such as supply and demand, performance, processing, aesthetics and design for all major material types.

Project 13. Recycled Content Labelling

Summary

This project aims to support industry as they increase uptake of recycled content into packaging. A clear and evidenced recycled content label will be vital in educating consumers on this important step of recycling and will also enable brands to showcase their commitment to sustainable packaging. Similar to the ARL, a consistent and verified on-pack label is vital for long-term education and behaviour change.

This work will rely on the findings from Project 10 Recycled Content Traceability, leveraging the traceability system/process as the evidence base for an on-pack label.

Objectives

- Enable clear and consistent communication of recycled content to consumers
- Guidance to packaging designers on recycled content

Deliverables

A recycled content labelling program that will include:

1. On-pack label design
2. Tested messaging incorporated in the label that will support the program (marketing, etc.).
3. Support resources (e.g. program guide)

Project 14. Member Pledges

Summary

APCO will work with Members to publicly pledge the volumes of specific materials that they will transition from virgin materials to recycled content by 2025. This is critical to help achieve the 50% recycled content target by 2025.

Objectives

- Drive greater uptake of recycled content in packaging by Members
- Signal demand for recycled materials in packaging to help drive investment in reprocessing

Deliverables

1. A survey for Members on pledging recycled content in packaging and other products
2. Formal pledge agreement signed by APCO Members
3. Public pledge list and supporting communications (webpage, media release, pledge participant resources and badges)

Project 15. Supporting Government Procurement of Recycled Content

Summary

Government procurement of recycled materials in the form of products (including packaging) and construction materials has been recognised as a potentially significant driver of market development. In November 2019 the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments committed to increasing their procurement of recycled content through Actions 4.1 to 4.6 of the National Waste Policy Action Plan. Given the work now underway to implement the National Waste Policy actions on government procurement, there is an opportunity for APCO to work with governments to design targeted support actions.

In particular, APCO is anticipating an opportunity to participate in a major research project to include waste-derived plastics in mainstream road construction nationally, both in spray seal and asphalt applications. Drawing on and amplifying existing work by Downer, Close the Loop and others, the project will involve the Australian Roads Research Board, the Queensland and WA Governments and other government, academic and industry partners, over two stages:

- Assessing specific waste streams and material blends with potential for use in road construction
- Testing and demonstrating the inclusion of the materials in road construction.

It is anticipated that APCO's role in this work will include drawing on our networks and analysis to support the identification and development of suitable plastic waste streams and collection processes, and supporting the promotion and sharing of the outcomes.

Objectives

To support government procurement of recycled materials by working with governments and other stakeholders to:

- Address gaps in information, knowledge and capability to procure recycled materials
- Build community of practice to exchange experience and accelerate procurement
- Support and promote work to address technical barriers to use of recycled materials, particularly inclusion of plastics in road construction.

Deliverables

1. A community of practice, drawing on APCO's networks to bring together government agencies and providers of recycled content to build capability through case studies and shared opportunities.
2. Gap analysis comparing the holistic approach outlined in the 2019 project report, with work being done by governments under the National Waste Policy actions 4.1 – 4.6, and identification of interventions to address the gaps.
3. Participation in the Australian Roads Research Board, Queensland and WA government research project to advance the inclusion of plastics in road construction.

Project 16. Strategies for Problematic and Unnecessary, Single-Use Plastic Packaging

Summary

The 2025 National Packaging Targets include a commitment to phase out problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging, as well as 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging. Target 5 in the National Waste Policy Action Plan also directly identifies APCO to deliver Action 5.4: Identify problematic and unnecessary plastic packaging to provide an evidence base for industry to take coordinated action.

In late 2019, APCO released a paper that identified the approach to harmonise the definition of 'problematic, unnecessary and single-use plastics packaging items'. This also included, as per the National Waste Policy Action Plan, a short list of packaging that will be addressed as a priority for coordinated action, and additional materials for greater research. The packaging for priority action are:

- Expanded polystyrene (EPS) food and beverage service containers
- EPS packaging fill
- Fragmentable plastics
- Light weight bags.

This project aims to provide a coordinated action plan for phasing-out the four identified problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging, as well as delivering additional research on the next priority materials for action.

Objectives

- APCO Members implement organisational action plans to phase out identified priority problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging
- Develop guidelines on approaches to phase out priority problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging
- Coordinate supply chains to work together to identify the most appropriate actions required to transition away from all four identified priority plastic packaging
- Educate industry and government on the other materials that should be considered for phase out due to varying reasons – polymers such as PVC, PS; rigid plastic additives such as titanium dioxide and carbon black; multi-material laminate soft plastics.

Deliverables

This project will deliver:

1. A Guideline for Members to develop an Action Plan for addressing all priority problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging, and the next steps towards other researched materials for phase out.
2. Member Action Plans on phase out of priority problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging.

Project 17. Approaches for Non-Recyclable Packaging

Summary

The 2025 National Packaging Targets include a commitment to phase out problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging, as well as 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging. The Australian Packaging Consumption & Resource Recovery Data report released in late 2019, defined that 88% of packaging is currently reusable, recyclable or compostable.

To achieve the 100% target, research will be undertaken to analyse the estimated 12% of packaging that is not currently recyclable. Critical to achieving this target and supporting all of the National Packaging Targets, this project will assist in identify opportunities for elimination, reduction or redesign.

Links to other projects:

- Strategies to phase out problematic and unnecessary single use plastic packaging are being developed through a separate project (Project 16). This project will consider all non-recyclable packaging and will coordinate with the work on plastics.
- Quantitative data on non-recyclable packaging is being collected through Project 18, which is underway.

Objectives

- To analyse the 12% of non-recyclable packaging materials to establish solutions to convert them to recyclable and / or reusable packaging formats.

Deliverables

This project will deliver:

1. A report on non-recyclable packaging and strategies to achieve the 100% target
2. Design recommendations integrated into relevant design guidelines (Quickstarts) for Members

Project 18. Annual Material Flow Analyses

Summary

Envisage Works will be engaged to collect consumption and recycling data for 2018-19 including:

- packaging placed onto the market (locally manufactured and imported) by weight
- amount of packaging recovered (reused, recycled, composted or energy recovery)
- recovery rates
- recycled content rates
- recoverability

This will update the previous report for 2017-18, which was published in early 2019. Key additions will include:

- estimating average weights for typical packaging units and the total number of units placed on the market

- collecting more detailed data on business-to-business (B2B) flows by ANZSIC code
- estimating the quantity of packaging being reused
- collecting data on material flows for container deposit schemes (CDS)
- publishing more data by jurisdiction

The Institute for Sustainable Futures (USF) at UTS has been engaged separately to update the Material Flow Analysis modelling with 2018-19 data as well as:

- additional data on B2B packaging and reuse
- modelling consumption and recovery scenarios in 2025

Objectives

The objectives of the project are to:

- enable APCO and its stakeholders to monitor progress towards the national packaging target (updating the 2017-18 report)
- estimate the quantity of packaging material in reuse systems and the quantity of single use packaging being avoided, to feed into the expanded Material Flow Analysis (MFA) model)
- understand B2B packaging flows in more detail (consumption and recycling) and the potential to substitute with reusable packaging

Deliverables

The deliverables will include:

1. Two reports: one from Envisage Works and one from ISF
2. An excel document from Envisage Works with:
 - aggregated consumption and recycling data (not to be published)
 - average packaging weights by format and material, which could be used to develop a tool to help Members estimate their packaging metrics for the Annual Reporting Tool.

Project 19. Circular Economy Hub

Summary

Planet Ark, will develop a Circular Economy Hub to drive innovation in the transition to a circular economy in Australia. This action was included in the National Waste Policy Action Plan to assist in reducing the total waste generated in Australia by 10% per person by 2030. The online platform will drive awareness and adoption of the circular economy and provide information to support its implementation.

Objective

- The objective of this project is to support the development of the CE Hub Marketplace to identify Australian packaging products made from sustainable materials

Deliverables

Deliverables associated with APCO activities to support the Hub are:

1. Completion of a Member survey to identify the criteria for packaging products to be included in the Marketplace
2. Agreement on the criteria for including 'sustainable packaging' on the Hub Marketplace
3. List of identified packaging products to be implemented on the Marketplace

Project 20. Sectoral Approaches

Summary

Work undertaken by APCO has highlighted the diversity and often nuanced nature of packaging when considered from a sectoral perspective.

In order to sharpen focus on those sector-specific challenges and drive the development of viable solutions, APCO, under the Collective Impact Model, will support industry sectors to facilitate improved and ongoing collaboration along the sectoral value chain, to improve packaging sustainability.

Objectives

- 1. Dairy Industry – Industry action on packaging sustainability**
- 2. Greenlife Industry – Improve material circularity in horticulture**
 - Support national expansion of Polypropylene plant pot recovery and recycling program
 - Transition ornamental horticulture industry to mono material packaging for plant pots, stakes, labels and tags to increase material consistency and circularity –
 - Industry Pledge to use PP exclusively in ornamental horticultural packaging, enabling a closed loop and progressively increasing recycled content.
- 3. Healthcare Sector – Support for the medical/dental industry to reduce single use plastics and identify reuse or closed loop models**
 - Characterise, map, prioritise and identify potential solutions to waste challenges across the sector and develop action plans to address priority list.

Deliverables

1. Dairy Industry
 - TBD in collaboration with industry sector
2. Greenlife Industry
 - National roll out of PP collection and reprocessing program
 - Industry Pledge to use PP exclusively in ornamental horticultural packaging,
3. Healthcare sector
 - Develop roadmap to prioritise and identify potential solutions to waste challenges and develop action plan to address priority list.

Project 21. Circular Plastics Research Initiative (CPRI)

Summary

The CPRI is an emerging forum to support collaboration between industry, researchers, investors and governments on research that advances a circular economy for plastics in Australia.

The CPRI is perceived as an open network of research institutions, companies, investors, industry associations, and government agencies with a shared interest in a sustainable plastics industry in Australia, facilitated and supported by a 'backbone organisation'. It is being developed as a work program under the ANZPAC Plastics Pact, with APCO as the backbone organisation. This will leverage APCO and the ANZPAC's engagement and alignment with industry and governments on packaging and other plastics, and global linkages through the global network of plastics pacts facilitated by Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

Functions of the CPRI will include:

- Actively building the network of universities, companies, industry associations, investors and government agencies
- Fostering linkages with international institutions, companies, networks, supply chains
- Delivering and promoting events to progress the research agenda
- Establishing an online portal for exchange of information on research capabilities, government programs and industry needs
- Supporting the development of funding proposals
- Promoting specific proposals and the broader agenda with government.

Objectives

The objective is to coordinate the activities between industry, government, investors and academia to undertake research that supports solutions for plastic packaging issues under the ANZPAC Plastic Pact program.

Deliverables

1. A paper outlining the CPRI, developed with partner universities, for publication on APCO's website and distribution to governments and other stakeholders.
2. A process to work with industry, researchers, investors and governments to articulate and prioritise research needs over time
3. A process to support and inform development of proposals for specific programs, which could include, amongst others:
 - a. NESP waste and sustainable communities hub
 - b. CRC
 - c. ARC ITTC
 - d. ARC LPS



To contact APCO please visit our website
www.packagingcovenant.org.au

