

Supermarket Soft Plastics Taskforce Meeting 18 Minutes

18 January 2024 10:30am - 11:30am

Attendees

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water: Cameron Hutchison, Caitlin Ellis, Annette Williams, Chantel Moore.

Coles: Brooke Donnelly, Simone Brookes, Nina Stephens, Sean O'Malley.

Woolworths: Alice Yang, Laurie Kozlovic, Peter Bruce, Nerilee Telford, Liam Brennan.

Aldi: Daniel Baker.

Guests: Jeremy Settle and Steven Lansdell from the Victorian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

Minutes

Agenda item 1: Welcome

- Cameron Hutchison delivered an acknowledgement of country.

Outcomes:

- **Attendees agreed** Coles would take minutes for this meeting.

Agenda items 2, 3 and 4: Victorian EPA, Update on the stockpile and reprocessing capability, and Update on the upcoming soft plastics store trial

- Woolworths provided an update on preparing for the launch of a pilot restart of the instore soft plastics collection program in [REDACTED]
- There are three key processors who are rapidly developing their infrastructure, namely [REDACTED], and progressing with obtaining relevant approvals. Woolworths noted that it will most likely be [REDACTED] that will be operational and able to receive volumes to support the pilot.
- At present, the Participants are continuing to work towards a target restart date [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to align with processing capacity becoming available. This timing is subject to one or more processing facilities of processors (most likely [REDACTED]) being operational.
- In preparing for the pilot, Woolworths has continued to liaise closely with the EPA Victoria and the processors regarding the process and obtaining the relevant approvals.
- Jeremy Settle and Steven Lansdell from EPA Victoria joined the meeting to provide an update on the relevant approvals for getting the facilities up and running in Victoria for the in-store pilot. The following was discussed:
 - The Participants have continued to work together to develop a pilot program for the recommencement of an instore soft plastics collection program;
 - EPA Victoria and other Victorian agencies are supportive of the Taskforce's approach and the work that has been done to reduce the legacy risk and removal of the stockpiles;
 - EPA Victoria noted that the immediate risk in getting the facilities up and running in time to support the pilot is the relevant council application process and timing,

however, both the EPA Victoria, relevant council and facility operators have collaboratively been working together to mitigate this risk.

- The EPA noted that, in developing any scheme, it is important for the Taskforce to consider the long term sustainability of that scheme.
- Based on their initial soft plastics forecasting, the Participants estimate that processors will have sufficient capacity to concurrently process the Victorian REDcycle stockpiled material, alongside the soft plastics returned to stores during the pilot.
- The Participants noted that in addition to testing operational capacity, the purpose of the pilot is to test consumer engagement and assess the quality, volume and brand categorisation of packaging materials returned during the pilot period.
- The Participants are developing in-store signage at the stores which are participating in the pilot to provide customers with relevant information, as well as media and customer engagement plans regarding the pilot.

Outcomes:

- **The Participants** confirmed that they are on track to commence the pilot restart of the instore soft plastics collection program [REDACTED].
- **Attendees agreed** that a further update on the progress of the pilot for the instore soft plastics collection program would be provided at the next Taskforce meeting.

Agenda item 5: [REDACTED] – update on independent product stewardship body for soft plastics

- The Participants held a meeting with the AFGC and key brand owners in late December 2023 to gauge the appetite for potential engagement from those parties to participate in developing a national products stewardship scheme, bringing together the work of the NPRS and the Soft Plastics Taskforce.
- Coles noted that the Participants have received [REDACTED] draft proposal regarding the potential scope of such a scheme for each Participant to consider.
- The Participants will consider the pathway forward for this body of work, including any necessary engagement with the Department, the ACCC and other stakeholders.

Agenda item 6 – other business and wrap-up

The Department raised questions regarding potential/possible ministerial engagement on any announcement on the pilot project and the [REDACTED] development phase”.

- The Taskforce outlined their plan [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. This announcement would be an opportunity to bring together the work of the Soft Plastics Taskforce and the NPRS into a one program pathway for soft plastics and would include government, the Soft Plastics Taskforce and the AFGC brand members involved with the NPRS.

Agenda item 7 Meeting close