

Media Release

Nestlé and iQ Renew partner on soft plastic recycling in resource recovery trial

28 February, 2020 - [Nestlé](#) and Australian recycler [iQ Renew](#) today announced a trial which aims to see soft plastics collected from over 100,000 homes through kerbside recycling and diverted from landfill.

With increasing consumer demand for improved recycling, the trial aims to find a way to collect, sort and process soft plastics that can be broadly adopted.

iQ Renew CEO Danial Gallagher said there is an opportunity in turning soft plastic from a waste to a resource. Soft plastics not only make up 20% of the volume of Australian household landfill bins, but are also frequently found incorrectly placed in recycling bins.

“Most Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) can’t separate soft plastic from other items in household recycling, so while soft plastic can be recycled, what we lack is a robust, scalable system to collect and process it using existing kerbside collection,” Mr Gallagher said.

“We’ve designed the trial so that at the front end, it will support householders to pre-sort their soft plastic and get it into a recycling stream, while behind the scenes, we’ll test using the sorted soft plastic as a resource in a range of different manufacturing processes,” he said.

Nestlé Australia CEO Sandra Martinez said Nestlé wanted to find sustainable paths to recycle packaging.

“While we are working to make all our packaging recyclable, we know that soft plastics is an area that needs greater focus and collaboration. We need to find ways to drive more recycling here,” Ms Martinez said.

“As Nestlé plans to reduce our virgin plastic use and increase the amount of food grade recycled plastic packaging we use, we need plastic to be collected. Given the low amount of soft plastic collected from consumers today, we hope this trial can unlock the significant potential for soft plastic packaging to become a resource.”

Ms Martinez said Nestlé also wanted to help people to recycle effectively.

“Australians are enthusiastic recyclers and want better recycling systems that take plastic packaging out of landfill. This trial will uncover how households understand soft plastics collection and answer critical questions about how it affects their in-home recycling behaviour. We have a vision for Australia to have a waste free future.”

The project will commence with a pilot of 2000 households, then plans to expand to over 100,000 households later in the year, processing around 750 tonnes of soft plastic that would otherwise be sent to landfill. Locations for the trial are currently under consideration.

The trial will be formally announced at the National Plastics Summit in Parliament House on Monday.

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iQ Renew is an Australian recycler operating and investing in “Intelligent Australian Recycling” solutions to make Australia a more circular economy from household to manufacturer. iQ Renew processes the majority of recyclables from north of Sydney and has started developing new supply chains between the community’s recyclables and innovative downstream manufacturing such as the [Cat-HTR™](#) chemical recycling technology (for end-of-life plastic into fuels and chemicals) and the [Virtual Quarry](#) (for recovered glass into clean engineered silica). www.iqrenew.com

Nestlé Australia is part of the global Nestlé group. Our vision is that none of our packaging, including plastics, ends up in landfill, in oceans, lakes and rivers, backed by a commitment that 100% of our packaging will be recyclable or reusable by 2025. We’re also eliminating non-recyclable plastics, supporting the development of a market for food grade recycled plastic packaging, and committed to reducing our use of virgin plastic by a third by 2025. www.nestle.com

NOTES:

- Soft (flexible) plastics are generally defined as plastics that can be scrunched into a ball, unlike ‘rigid’ plastics such as bottles and tubs, which are moulded and hold their shape. (source: [APCO](#))
- Australia’s National Packaging Targets include the goal of recycling 70% of Australia’s plastic packaging by 2025 (source: [APCO](#)). It is understood that this will need significant expansion of plastics recycling.
- Soft plastic can be recycled via 1) **physical recycling**, which turns soft plastic into other items such as heavy duty outdoor plastic goods and roads; and 2) **chemical recycling**, which turns soft plastic back into oil, which can be used for making new plastic resins, for fuel and other purposes.
- Nestlé is a partner of the REDcycle program, a product stewardship scheme which collects post-consumer soft plastic packaging in-store in Coles and Woolworths for recycling. This scheme has grown significantly; however, overall soft plastic recycling rates remain low.