

Australian Local Government Association – 2023 National General Assembly

Theme: Our communities our future

Motion – Packaging Targets:

This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to introduce new, more aggressive regulations that set a minimum standard for sustainable packaging and waste responsibilities for all manufacturers, supported by appropriate market incentives to motivate compliance with these standards.

National Objective: (*why is this a national issue and why should this be debated at the NGA – max 200 words*)

Australia uses around 70 billion pieces of soft “scrunchable” plastics including food wrappers each year and it is estimated that one million tonnes of Australia's annual plastic consumption is single-use plastic.

Our use of plastic is increasing and without urgent action, will double by 2040. Currently, around 84% of plastic ends up in landfill and only 13% is recycled.

The Australian Packaging Covenant (the Covenant) is a national regulatory framework under the National Environment Protection (Used Packaging Materials) Measure 2011 (NEPM) that sets out how governments and businesses across Australia share the responsibility for managing the environmental impacts of packaging. The Covenant aims to reduce the environmental impacts of Consumer Packaging and supports an industry-led component of a co-regulatory arrangement underpinned by the NEPM. The Covenant applies to businesses in the supply chain that have a total annual turnover of \$5 million or more, that meet the definition of Brand Owner as set out within the NEPM.

Despite good intentions and exacerbated by the recently suspended REDcycle program, there is little evidence to date that the National Packaging Covenant is on course to meet its 2025 National Packaging Targets.

Summary of key arguments: (*background information and supporting arguments – max 500 words*)

The 2025 National Packaging Targets were developed and supported by Australian industry to deliver a new and sustainable approach to packaging. The 2025 Targets are:

1. 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging;
2. 70% of plastic packaging being recycled or composted;
3. 50% of average recycled content included in packaging;
4. The phase out of problematic and unnecessary single-use plastics packaging

For non-APCO members there are no readily available reports regarding progress towards achieving these targets beyond results published on the APCO website for financial year 2019/20. The 2019/20 results indicate:

Target 1. 85%;

Target 2. 16%;

Target 3. 39%;

Target 4. Still in development phase.

To this end, it is considered there is an opportunity to have this proposal encapsulated within the policy and advocacy platform of the Australian Local Government Association through the adoption of this National General Assembly motion.