

Supermarket Soft Plastics Taskforce Meeting 4 Minutes

19 January 2023, 9:00am-10:30am

Attendees

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water: Chloe Bird, Jason Dunn, Annette Williams.

Coles: Brooke Donnelly, Kristen Boverly-Spencer, Llew Fleming, Simone Brookes, Vittoria Bon, Wade Moss.

Woolworths: Alice Yang, Christopher Lane, Laurie Kozlovic, Nerilee Telford, Peter Bruce.

Aldi: Daniel Baker.

Minutes

Agenda item 1: Welcome and attendance

- Chloe Bird confirmed her role as Chair for this meeting and commenced with an acknowledgement of country.

Outcome:

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

Agenda item 2: Important updates to share

- The Department noted a letter from Recycling Victoria referring to large volumes of material collected through the REDcycle program being stored at [REDACTED] sites across Victoria.
- The Attendees noted that Woolworths had received a similar letter, but not Coles.
- Coles noted that it had received a letter from the NSW EPA.
- Woolworths noted that the letter from Recycling Victoria [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- The Attendees [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] noted the importance of getting information from State authorities, for example, relating to their investigations of sites landlords, to consider in the context of any Short-term Solution.

Outcomes:

- **Attendees agreed** that the relevant State authorities should conduct investigations with site landlords and owners of the material and share this information with the Taskforce to consider in the context of a Short-term Solution.
- **Attendees agreed** that Coles and Woolworths would respond to correspondence received from the State authorities noting that they are open to further discussions and would like clarity on what the State authorities have investigated and discovered to date.

- **Woolworths agreed** that it would share a copy of the Recycling Victoria letter shared with Woolworths and the Department with the other participants.

Agenda item 3: Close the Loop presentation

- Joe Foster, Steve Morris and Kesh Nair from Close the Loop (CTL) attended the meeting to provide an update on the CTL business.
- CTL provided background on their approach to recycling, which involves a circular economy, and new technology that produces downstream products 'tonerplas' and 'Rflex'.

Attendees discussed the recent fire at CTL's facility and its subsequent re-build.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Attendees broadly discussed the capacity of the CTL facilities and their ability to recycle contaminated material. CTL confirmed its facilities were capable of processing contaminated material.

[REDACTED]

- CTL left the meeting and the Attendees discussed the presentation, [REDACTED]
- Attendees noted that CTL's capacity to process contaminated material [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Outcome:

[REDACTED]

Agenda item 4: Review of roadmap

- *Group report back on review of recyclers*
- *Capacity mapping*
- *Collection data*
- Attendees discussed the draft roadmap circulated by Woolworths in late 2022 and noted the Participants aim to release a public communication in early February 2023.

Outcomes:

- **Attendees agreed** to return with feedback on the draft roadmap by 27 January 2023.
- **Attendees agreed** to include the roadmap as an agenda item for the Taskforce meeting on 3 February 2023.
- **Attendees agreed** that Aldi would confirm its participation in the public communication of the roadmap.

Agenda item 5: Export regulation (and options)

- Jason Dunn from the Hazardous Waste Section of the Department joined the meeting to share information on export regulation including in the context of a Short-term Solution.
- The Department’s discussion referred to requirements for exporting soft plastics under the Basel Convention, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Control System and the *Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020*.
- The department explained that in 2021 many countries, including Australia, implemented controls on mixed or contaminated plastics through the Basel Convention. When exporting these types of plastic from Australia exporters must obtain consent even if the country of import has chosen to not control these wastes.
- The Department noted obtaining consent from the country of import, as well as all transit countries can take time. Obtaining consent under the OECD Control System is generally quicker, and this can be further streamlined when using a “pre-consented” facility.

Agenda item 6: Future meeting schedule

- *Standing invitations to regulators*
- *Subject specialty sessions between regular meetings*
- Attendees discussed the frequency of meetings and the possibility of creating sub-meetings for deep dives on specific topics such as logistics and State authority investigations. It was noted that sub-meetings would only be appropriate where covered by the ACCC authorisation.

[REDACTED]

Outcomes:

- **Attendees agreed** that further meetings will take place on 3 and 10 February 2023 and that Taskforce meetings would occur fortnightly after that point.
- **Attendees agreed** to consider topics for sub-meetings over the coming weeks, as well as which organisations to invite to upcoming meetings, and submit these to the Department by close of business Monday 23 January 2023.

[REDACTED]

Agenda item 7: Communications

- *Public communications roadmap process*
- *Communications plan for January*
 - Attendees discussed a communications plan for the roadmap under Agenda item 4, ‘Review of roadmap’.

Outcomes:

- **Attendees confirmed** their aim to release a public communication in early February 2023.

Agenda item 8: Other business and wrap-up

- Attendees discussed the requirement under the ACCC authorisation to provide the ACCC with a progress report within 3 months of the date of the conditional authorisation and noted that the ACCC has authority to cancel the authorisation.

[REDACTED]

- Attendees discussed the establishment of a stewardship program and noted the need for a larger group of brands to be involved in the funding of collections within the program.

Outcomes:

- **Department agreed** to confirm the date on which the ACCC progress report is due.
- **Attendees agreed** that an update from REDcycle is required as soon as possible.

[REDACTED]

Agenda item 9: Meeting close