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RESPONSE TO SOFT PLASTIC STEWARDSHIP AUSTRALIA RESPONSE (AFTER PRE-DECISION CONFERENCE) TO SUBMISSIONS FROM INTERESTED PARTIES

In the SPSA response (10/10/25) they make particular reference to a key point in our submission and oral statement at the pre-decision conference, relating to the issue of the status quo. SPSA claim that their scheme is better than the current situation where only 1% of soft plastics are recovered and recycled; and that it is unwise to compare it to a 'perfect, all inclusive solution (and in some cases a regulated, mandatory scheme)'.

Our brief response is:

1. There is great likelihood that a regulated, mandatory scheme will be put in place – and as recently at the Estimates hearings, the federal government has confirmed it is working on this reform to fulfil its promise to regulate this term.
2. It is unlikely it will be 'perfect' but will undoubtedly be much better than the SPSA voluntary scheme.
3. Our critical concern was the 8-year period for which authorisation is being sought, as it would cause a relaxation in government timetables when action is urgent. The ACCC decision should not provide an excuse to defer or delay regulation.
4. Consequently we submit the ACCC should refuse authorisation to leave an open field for regulatory reform; or alternatively, provide only a very limited authorisation on the basis that it is explicitly for a short term and conditional that the SPSA participate in and cooperate with all efforts to quickly bring a regulated scheme into operation during the current term of parliament.

Jeff Angel
Director
28 October 2025