

Submission by Executive Manager, Waste & Environment-17 April 2025

The City of Ballarat is Victoria's largest inland centre, about 110 kilometres west of the Melbourne CBD. Ballarat is one of the fastest growing regional cities in Australia. The municipality's population is estimated at 118,137 in 2023 and is set to grow to almost 165,000 by 2046. Significant improvements in the recycling of soft plastics are required to meet the Australian packaging target of 70% recovery of plastic packaging. A detailed Materials Flow Analysis commissioned by the City of Ballarat in 2022, estimates that less than 5% of soft plastics are recycled in the Grampians Central West Region of Victoria. There is strong support from the Ballarat community for recycling initiatives. During an extensive round of community engagement undertaken in 2022, 95% of the 2,176 respondents indicated that they were passionate or supportive of recycling and the environment. The City of Ballarat has been part of the NPRS soft plastic kerbside collection pilot since July 2024. This pilot has received a high level of support and participation from our residents with almost 6,000, or 10% of households, currently taking part in this voluntary program. Residents consistently provide positive feedback to council officers at community events, with many seeking the continuation of the current pilot program. ACCC authorisation will enable the City of Ballarat to continue to provide our residents with a convenient and accessible way to recycling their soft plastics and potentially implement a council wide collection service to reduce preventable landfill in the long term. Should you require any further information regarding our kerbside soft plastics collection pilot and the response of residents, please do not hesitate to contact me. Sincerely Justin Horne.