

Dear ACCC,

RE: Soft Plastic Stewardship Australia Limited (SPSA) Application for Authorisation
AA1000695

I am writing this submission on behalf of Halve Waste an organisation dedicated to helping local communities reduce waste and improve recycling practice.

Halve Waste has been actively involved in the National Plastic Recycling Scheme (NPRS) trials and soft plastic kerbside collection pilots since 2022. Through our participation, we have supported the roll-out of this innovative recycling program across the councils of Albury, Wodonga, Indigo, and Alpine, with significant success. The trials have seen strong participation and positive feedback from residents, highlighting the program's potential to reduce landfill waste and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Since 2022, Halve Waste has supported 2,000 households in Albury-Wodonga in participating in Phase 1 of the soft plastic kerbside collection pilot. Due to high demand from residents, the program expanded in August 2024 with Phase 2, which increased participation across Albury-Wodonga and extended the program to include Indigo and Alpine Councils. In addition to the 2,000 households already involved, Phase 2 has seen an additional 1,522 households in Albury, 1,169 in Wodonga, and 459 in Alpine. Indigo Shire Council has also experienced strong engagement, with a large proportion of residents opting into the program. Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly regarding the transparency of the recycling process, which has already diverted over 12 tonnes of soft plastics from our local landfill.

Halve Waste's involvement in these trials has allowed us to actively support our community in taking part in meaningful environmental action. Throughout our community presentations and discussions with residents, one of the most encouraging elements of the program has been the transparency of the recycling process. With support from SPSA we have been able to ensure that residents are aware of how their soft plastics are processed within Australia, with some of the recycling facilities located just a few hours away from our region. This transparency has been very well received, helping to foster greater trust in the program and boosting residents' confidence in the recycling process as a whole. Residents have also praised the convenience of using a special council supplied bag in their own kerbside recycling bins to collect soft plastics. This simple yet effective solution has encouraged high participation rates and made it easier for households to contribute to the recycling efforts.

This initiative offers significant environmental, economic, and social benefits. Every year, Australia consumes 538,000 tonnes of soft plastics, with only 6% being recovered. SPSA's scheme aims to recover much of the 300,000 tonnes of soft plastic that currently ends up in landfill or the environment, creating new economic value while reducing reliance on imported recycled materials. The program also holds the potential to create jobs, boosting local economies by promoting domestic recycling and manufacturing.

We also understand that concerns have been raised regarding SPSA's independence, transparency, and viability. SPSA operates as an independent, not-for-profit entity with a strong governance structure and robust oversight. Their commitment to transparency, including the provision of data on collected materials, recycling outcomes, and levy investments, ensures confidence in the scheme's operations.

We strongly support the SPSA program and urge the ACCC to grant favourable authorisation, enabling the expansion of this transformative scheme. The program is a

crucial step toward advancing recycling practices and reducing landfill waste, benefiting communities across Australia.

Please feel free to contact me for further information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anna Hall
Program Coordinator, Halve Waste