

## **Submission by Jesse Mallen-26 August 2025**

The Soft Plastics Stewardship Australia (SPSA) must be an independent organisation that actually improves soft plastic recycling in Australia without benefiting or enriching its members. The Soft Plastics Recycling crisis we have been in for the past 5-10 years has been caused by plastics industry and supermarket interests to externalise their own waste problem. They must not be allowed to profit from being seen to facilitate its solution. Funding should therefore come from member parties and not from councils or the community, and funding must therefore be based on proven and effective environmental metrics of plastic actually recycled and plastic diverted from environment. In other words, rather than member organisations profiting from a public levy and accomplishing little, member organisations should be rewarded for accomplishing much needing to pay less. Their efforts and resources should be the ones to clean up this mess, or alternatively they should be required by the ACCC to stop plastic waste at the source before products ever reach the shelves. There must also be measures in place to avoid greenwashing as part of this organisation. Independent voices must lead it, and openness to outcomes must be provided so independent organisations can validate efficacy. Another focus must be on the proposed market for recycled products, as it was the shrinking of this market that doomed RedCycle in 2022. Broader legislation is required to incentivise the adoption of recycled products over virgin alternatives and the ACCC should also consider an 'equal in - equal out' policy, that member organisations are responsible for finding markets for the plastic waste they put into the recycling pipeline. This will all be a lot of work and be very expensive but this is a cost that has been externalised for many decades by the very organisations seeking to profit from this. The ACCC must put them to task to clean this mess up!