

Submission by Maria Arranz-21 August 2025

As an everyday Australian, first and foremost I want a soft plastics recycling/processing program that will be transparent and fit for purpose. It must not end up anything like the Redcycle program did, that is, letting people think that a recycling scheme was functioning when it wasn't. Our plastics problem is a major social, health and environmental challenge affecting all living organisms through the air we breathe, the food and drink we swallow and invading every aspect of the natural world: land, waterways and oceans. Please do not make this system about mere expediency. Those of you involved in operating this system must see yourselves as not just managers but as custodians. By achieving a program of high quality and effectiveness you will be contributing to the well-being of most facets of our continent through preventing plastic contamination. This is an enormous and an ethical task and I wish you every success. On the pragmatic side, I believe we need a soft plastics recycling scheme that: - is fair to consumers. If it is to be funded through a levy on the manufacturers when they sell their products to supermarkets, the corporations involved **MUST NOT** pass on the levy cost to consumers. These gigantic businesses make enormous profits every year while many people who are obliged to buy food from them often struggle financially. Therefore, it must include an Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme so that producers are responsible for the full lifecycle of soft plastics, including collection and recycling costs. - has mandatory collection and recycling within Australia (not exported to other countries) - incentivises the use of truly bio-degradable and non-polluting packaging as well as the accurate labelling of packaging so consumers are not misled about recyclability of the various soft plastics. - involves other economy sectors that generate a high volume of soft plastics such as the fast food sector, home consumer goods packaging etc.