



AUSTRALIAN
**FOOD &
GROCERY**
COUNCIL

INVITATION

FOR LOCAL COUNCILS AND
MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITIES (MRFs)



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
To participate in Trials forming the
National Plastics Recycling Scheme
(NPRS) for soft plastics in 2023/24

Issued January 2023

Introduction for local councils and material recovery facilities (MRFs)

You are invited to submit an expression of interest (EOI) in participating in the National Plastics Recycling Scheme (NPRS) in collecting soft plastics.

The NPRS is an innovative stewardship scheme for soft plastics packaging being developed by the Australian Food & Grocery Council (AFGC) on behalf of its members and with the support of the Australian Government. The scheme is modelled on successful international schemes to help meet critical National Packaging Targets by 2025. The NPRS has support from state and local governments, AFGC members and Australian plastics supply chain. Its objectives include:

- improving the design of soft plastic packaging for recyclability
- accelerating soft plastics collection and recycling at scale for financial viability
- increasing recycled content in plastic packaging.

At the local level the scheme will provide communities with an easy-to-use, low-cost soft plastic recycling services via kerbside collections or drop-off where kerbside collections are not available or feasible. The scheme will also transform the management, governance and traceability of soft plastics in Australia so it is reprocessed into products via mechanical and/or advanced chemical recycling, including food/pharma-grade soft plastic packaging, to finally close the loop for circular soft plastics in Australia.

Trials of kerbside collection for groups of 1,000 to 2,250 households are currently being held in six NSW, Victorian and South Australian local government areas and have been very well received by local communities. Together the AFGC and the councils are measuring impacts and value in the trials via Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) audits and community satisfaction surveys. We anticipate the scheme will help councils and MRFs achieve landfill diversion targets, reduce litter and turn soft plastics into a new plastic commodity. It is proposed to expand the trials to all households in participating municipalities in 2023-24.

Plans (during the pre-commercialisation phase in 2023-24-25) are to develop, refine, standardise and launch the NPRS nationally via:

- expanding these existing trials to all households in these municipalities, and
- commence additional trials with further new councils/MRFs via these EOIs.

The AFGC is working to establish the NPRS as a legal not-for-profit entity that will contract with supply chain partners to develop a circular plastics supply chain in Australia. For more information about what a circular supply chain will look like, visit the [AFGC NPRS website](#), where you can also find information about existing scheme partners and Foundation Supporters.

Scope of this Invitation

Expressions of interest are sought from councils and/or MRFs interested in discussing and potentially commencing soft plastics collection trials in their municipality in either 2023 or 2024 as part of the scheme. Councils and/or MRFs are invited to provide information using the EOI form (at the end of this document).

Councils/MRFs are under no obligation to participate in the trials by submitting the EOI form. The AFGC will review EOIs with a view to negotiating and establishing trials with councils with shared funding arrangements (for potentially two rounds in 2023 and 2024).

The AFGC is seeking non-obligation EOIs from metro, regional and rural councils and/or MRFs for:

- a) Trials for ~2,000 households for a 6-12-month period (similar to the current six council trials) in areas where kerbside recycling bins are provided. If councils, MRFs and communities are satisfied, the scope can extend to whole municipality household collections over time.
- b) Trials for drop off at depots or appropriate venues, particularly in regional and remote communities without kerbside recycling collections.

Timing

Expressions of interest will be accepted from Friday 3 February to COB Friday 17 March 2023. The AFGC will run an Information Webinar briefing on 20 February from 2-3pm AEST (a second session may be held on a subsequent date). The briefings will be an opportunity for questions about the EOI submission process and the NPRS project. The AFGC is also seeking EOI from processors of soft plastics to ensure it has canvassed the field for material off-take agreements.

EOIs will be assessed in March-April 2023 by the AFGC. This may lead to further engagement with councils, companies, state and federal governments on co-funding and resource support. Further consultation will be undertaken from April 2023 regarding potential onboarding from June.

Onboarding support includes regular short team meetings and sharing materials developed through the 2022-23 council trials such as:

- FAQs for Council Customer Service Centres
- Websites materials incl 'how to' photos from current trials
- Sample household starter packs of letters, envelopes, bags
- Letter of Agreement on roles, responsibilities, funding, collaborations etc.

The intent is that communications and trials commence in Sept-Oct 2023 or in 2024 for a 6-12month period. Depending upon successful operational results and agreements the trial could expand to all households, other locations and/or neighbouring councils over time. The criteria for extending the trial will be agreed with AFGC and participants in late 2023.

Financial and material flow arrangements

The AFGC will be evaluating improvements to the current trials in Feb/March and this will help inform expansion of current LGA collections and the next round of trials.

For household kerbside collections (as with the current 2022-23 council trials) the AFGC anticipates that each council may contribute between 33% to 50% of the cost of starter pack production and distribution to households. Outlay costs per trial range between \$20,000 - \$35,000 depending upon number of households, number of bags in starter kits, duration and whether there are contributions by state/federal governments. AFGC NPRS company members will contribute to the cost of the trials, plus toward overall stewardship scheme management, staffing and administration.

In terms of forming a model for drop-off, the AFGC can co-design a model for drop-off and collection with councils and service providers, and welcomes EOI on options. For example, this may include a similar cost-share model for communications and the transport of collected materials.

The AFGC will continue to engage federal/state governments and supply chain partners on the phased growth of the scheme, particularly the level of interest and likely quantities evidenced in the EOIs. To reduce costs, stockpile risks and ensure material is processed, Council collections will be confirmed when processing capacity with approved end market service providers is confirmed.

Benefits and eligibility criteria for Councils and MRFs

A number of effective features of this scheme were developed in conjunction with participating councils and MRFs in 2022, and similar arrangements are likely to apply for councils in 2023-24. Greater success and efficiency will be achieved with councils that are willing to:

- fund 33%-50% of the trial (eg household starter packs delivered to homes)
- use the tested, designated and approved bags which are compliant with the scheme
- handle public queries and collaborate on media releases, communications and surveys
- work with other councils and off-take partners (reprocessors) involved in the trials
- acknowledge NPRS parties funding supporters incl AFGC members and off-take reprocessors
- collate and share consumer feedback and trial performance information, incl quality, quantity, sorting, landfill savings with the AFGC.

Data and outcomes

In addition to providing an easy smart solution for recycling soft plastics in your community, participating councils and MRFs will gain insight on the following:

- Optimum collection models, collection bag design and distribution
- Household participation rates (%)
- Household collection rates (kg)
- Quantity Vs quality collected
- Impacts on paper and residual stream
- Cost impacts (positive and negative).

AFGC Briefing sessions, lodging EOI and contact details

The AFGC will hold an **online information Briefing session** on **Monday 20 February, 2-3pm AEST**. Please register via email to nprs@afgc.org.au with full name and contact details to receive a link.

Please complete this form and email it back to nprs@AFGC.org.au by no later than **Friday 17 March 2023**. You can also call the AFGC with queries: (02) 6273 1466.

AFGC member supporter logos

The following champion companies are supporters of the NPRS trials. The AFGC greatly appreciates their vision, commitment and contribution to the scheme.



Your Expression of Interest form – lodge by Fri 17 March 2023

I would like to find out more and for our community and council to be considered to participate in the National Plastics Recycling Scheme project. I understand that we are under no obligation to proceed to the trials.

Part A – Council Information

Contact Name:	
Job Title:	
Contact Email:	
Contact phone number/s:	
Name of Council:	
Population of Municipality:	
Number of households in municipality:	
Number of households in municipality with a kerbside recycling service:	
MRF Location:	
MRF operator company name:	
General waste collected per year via kerbside bins (est tonnes):	
Actual or est percentage of tonnes of soft plastics in general waste:	
A) Suggested number of households/or area for trial	
OR B) Suggested drop-off site(s) and approx. households serviced	
Preferred start year 2023 or 2024	

Part B – Sorting MRF Information (This can be filled in or is optional at this stage)

MRF Contact person name:	
Contact Details: Phone	
Email	
Recycling Collection Frequency:	
Does collection contain glass?	
MRF is aware/interested in soft plastic recycling:	

We welcome your comments and questions: