



AUSTRALIAN  
**FOOD &  
GROCERY**  
COUNCIL

# INVITATION

FOR PROCESSORS OF SOFT PLASTICS



**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 processors of soft plastics

**You are invited to submit an expression of interest (EOI) in participating in the National Plastic Recycling Scheme project (NPRS) as a processor of soft plastic packaging produced by the scheme.**

The NPRS is an innovative stewardship scheme for soft plastic 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 service via kerbside collection or drop-off where kerbside collections are not available or feasible. The scheme will transform the management, governance and traceability of soft plastics in Australia so that material is reprocessed into products via mechanical and/or advanced chemical recycling, particularly for 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.

The AFGC is inviting more councils and MRFs to express their interest in participating in additional trials during the pre-commercialisation phase. This phase, taking place in 2023-24-25, will assist develop, refine, standardise and launch the NPRS nationally. Through this EOI process we seek to find materials processors and match them to the supply of collected soft plastic feedstock from Councils and MRFs.

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 companies interested in conducting post-consumer soft plastic decontamination and reprocessing of material collected under the NPRS project as part of the scheme via mechanical and/or advanced chemical processing.

Companies are invited to provide information using the EOI form (at the end of this document).

Companies are under no obligation to participate in the trials by submitting the EOI form. The AFGC will review EOIs from processors with a view to commencing negotiations for potential offtake agreements for soft plastics covered by the scheme.

The AFGC will establish and maintain a Non-Disclosure Agreement with parties, if not already in place. The AFGC recognises that companies may already have agreements in place with suppliers and customers, technology providers etc. The AFGC is seeking to find the best fit and best number of entities to provide a robust, viable scheme for Australia.

The AFGC is seeking Expressions of Interest from companies meeting the following capability criteria:

- a) Mechanical processing: sorting, cleaning and processing treatment of post-consumer soft plastics to any level of quality and quantity for own use, potential or existing customers of manufactured rigid or flexible finished product or packaging, or further processing, AND/OR
- b) Advanced chemical processing: in treatment of soft plastics for potential manufacture into food/pharma grade plastics.

## 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 3.30-4.30pm AEDT (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. Processors are also welcome to register to join in the FAQ session for councils and MRFs, also on 20 February, from 2.00-3.00pm.

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

The AFGC anticipates that parties will progress to sign a letter of agreement detailing roles, contributions, communications and other key matters around the NPRS. This will be timed to coincide with agreements with councils and expanded collections to match supply with production capacity.

## Financial and material flow arrangements

The AFGC recognises the significant expectations of community and governments for solutions to plastics and soft plastics in particular. The NPRS provides an opportunity to secure plastics at scale for mechanical recycling and chemical recycling to substitute virgin plastics in packaging.

Based on global best practice, the AFGC is currently developing a financial model to raise member levies from brand owners and retailers to contract soft plastics processors and mechanical and chemical recyclers. As with the current council trials in NSW, Vic and SA, the AFGC anticipates that partners in the scheme will contribute to the success of the scheme. This may take the form of sharing landfill savings, communications, transport and logistics, data and reporting on traceability.

## Benefits and eligibility criteria for participation

A number of features of the trials were developed in conjunction with participating councils, MRFs and offtake partners, and a similar process is likely to apply in 2023-24. Greater success and efficiency will be achieved with companies that are willing to:

- Work cooperatively with other parties involved in the trial enabling improved design and success of the scheme
- Share benefits of participating in the scheme such as landfill savings
- Acknowledge NPRS parties involved and funding the scheme via communications
- Collaborate on industry and public communications

- Obtain and maintain relevant certification for quality and reporting on traceability of material flow (inward and outward PCR product)
- Collate and share operational feedback and trial performance information with the AFGC.

## Data and outcomes

Participants in the trials will receive aggregated data on measures including material quality, household participation, tonnage rates per household and the potential supply of feedstock from the council and MRF EOI.

## AFGC Briefing sessions, lodging EOI and contact details

The AFGC's online Information Briefing session will be held on **Monday 20 Feb**, running from **3.30 to 4.30pm AEST**.

Please register via email to [nprs@afgc.org.au](mailto:nprs@afgc.org.au) with full name and contact details to receive a link.

Please complete the EOI form below and email it to [nprs@AFGC.org.au](mailto:nprs@AFGC.org.au) no later than **COB Friday 17 March 2023**.

You can also call the AFGC with queries on (02) 6273 1466.

## AFGC member supporter logos

The following companies are supporters of the NPRS trials. The AFGC greatly appreciates their vision, commitment and contribution to the scheme. The AFGC looks forward to adding your company name to our list of partners in the scheme.



## Your expression of Interest form – lodge by Friday 17 March 2023

I would like to find out more about being a part of the NPRS project, a whole of supply chain scheme for soft plastic recycling for Australia in partnership with the AFGC, councils, other processors and end-users. I understand that in lodging this form I and my organisation are under no obligation to participate in trials.

<b>Contact Name:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Contact Email:</b>	
<b>Contact phone numbers:</b>	
<b>Name of Company:</b>	
<b>Location of head office:</b>	
<b>Location of processing site/s:</b>	
<b>Describe current processing activity:</b>	
<b>Describe your end Product/s (eg pellet, flake, benches, oil)</b>	
<b>Current inbound capacity (t):</b>	
<b>Outbound capacity (t) by material/product types:</b>	
<b>Do you currently have written specifications on inward and/or outward product?</b>	
<b>Anticipated date you could receive NPRS material?:</b>	
<b>Overview of potential processing upgrades &amp; capacity (T) in 2023, 2024 &amp; 2025?</b>	

We welcome your comments, additional information and questions: