

## **Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Public Hearing Melbourne 5 August 2024**

### **Questions on Notice and Hansard corrections**

**CHAIR:** *Has the AFGC or anyone else—maybe APCO—done any projections of what kind of tonnage is going to be required if your scheme was to be fully operational and effective for recycling?*

**Ms Barden:** *Yes, we have, and I'd be happy to provide that on notice to the committee. We've done a lot of analysis looking at the amount of tonnages on the market, the amount that would be collected and the capacity of infrastructure that's needed. Yes, we'd be happy to share that on notice*

#### **Response from AFGC - 26 August 2024:**

Dear Chair

Thank you for giving the AFGC the opportunity to respond to the question on notice following the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications Public Hearing on August 5, 2024.

We have provided data below obtained from a recent Australian Packaging Covenant (APCO) report, data and analysis from recent soft plastics kerbside trials, and insights into the current processing capacity infrastructure available domestically.

#### **Australian Packaging Covenant (APCO) Data**

A recent APCO report estimated that in FY2022, approximately 587 tonnes of soft plastic were Placed on the Market (PoM). Of the PoM, 72% (or 422 tonnes) is estimated to be business-to-consumer soft plastics commonly found in households. The report notes that PoM recovery was 1%, which equals 46kg per household per annum.

#### **Soft Plastics Scheme (Scheme)**

The Scheme's long-term ambition is to have multiple collection channels of soft plastics, including kerbside collection, return to store and other return collection points.

The recent Scheme kerbside trials highlighted that community preference for kerbside collections was strong. Results showed approximately 35-40% household participation rate within 3-months of the collection option becoming available in their council.

While REDcycle was operational, its collection peaked nationally at 7,800 tonnes per annum after 10 years, which equates to approximately 2% of household soft plastics.

It is estimated that with a national participation rate of 50-60% of households collecting approximately 75% of soft plastics in these homes, approximately 158 -190KT of soft plastics would be collected annually from households' kerbside collection. Additionally, we are partnering with other stakeholders to assess multi-channel collection points such as Return to Store and other collection points.

### **Processing Infrastructure Capacity for Soft Plastics**

Our estimates are that c.10,000-15,000 tonnes of onshore processing capacity will be online by the end of FY25; however, this capacity could change depending on domestic infrastructure investment confidence and commercialisation. This capacity will be adequate for the current Return to Store collection model and the processing of the existing soft plastics stockpile. However, long-term further capacity will be required to process the projected 158 -190KT of soft plastics, which we anticipate could be collected through kerbside collection should a national kerbside collection standard be adopted.

We thank you for giving the AFGC the opportunity to provide further information. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Barry Cosier  
Director, Sustainability  
Australian Food & Grocery Council