

Australian Packaging Covenant

Smarter packaging, less waste, cleaner environment

Strategic Plan

July 2010 to June 2015

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Australian Packaging Covenant Secretariat
PO Box 19016, Southbank Victoria 3006
apc@packagingcovenant.org.au
(03) 9861 2322

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Edited, designed and produced by PB Publishing, Brisbane,
69 Ann Street, Brisbane, Queensland, 4000,
saanderson@pb.com.au

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A commitment by governments and industry to the sustainable design, use and recovery of packaging.



Context

The Australian Packaging Covenant (the Covenant) is the voluntary part of an industry and government arrangement to reduce the environmental impacts of packaging by encouraging improvements in packaging design, higher recycling rates and better stewardship of packaging.

The Covenant is an agreement between the Environment Protection Heritage Council (EPHC), made up of state and federal Environment Ministers, and industries in the packaging supply chain. The Covenant is a collaborative arrangement with governments and industry working together to deliver its goals and targets. It is supported by national and state legislation that imposes obligations and penalties on non-signatories to the Covenant. This ensures that brand owners that are signatories to the Covenant and fulfil their obligations are not competitively disadvantaged by those that do not.

The Covenant requires signatories to prepare an action plan stating how they will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Covenant, implement their action plan, and report annually. Signatories that fail to act can be excluded from the benefits of the Covenant and be required to comply with the legislation in each jurisdiction.

Covenant signatories will measure and report on their performance through their annual reports to the Council. Council will measure and report on its performance against the strategic plan in its annual report to EPHC.

The Covenant is one mechanism that is contributing to the overall National Waste Strategy and State and Territory Strategies that seek to minimise the generation of all sources of waste and maximise its recovery and recycling.

Over the last ten years industry and governments have successfully collaborated in reducing the environmental impacts of packaging. In the first five years substantial progress was made through the implementation by local governments of kerbside recycling programs. In the second five years there has been substantial progress made through improved recovery of materials for recycling.

This 5-year strategic plan sets out the strategies and priorities that will be employed to deliver further progress with a focus on improved packaging design and use. The plan also takes into account the request from the EPHC, that the implementation of the Covenant give greater emphasis to the recovery and recycling of used packaging in away from home locations and to reducing littering, with the benefits of the Covenant being more equitably distributed across Australia, including to lower population centres.

Funding for the implementation of the strategic plan is provided by both industry and jurisdictions on an equal basis. Industry has committed \$3 million annually for the life of this strategic plan. This will be matched by jurisdictions. The strategic plan will be reviewed every five years.

The Australian Packaging Covenant Council

The Australian Packaging Covenant Council (Council) has overall responsibility for developing and managing policy, strategy and compliance arrangements for the Covenant and is accountable to EPHC.

The Council is comprised of senior representatives of the jurisdictions that make up EPHC, industry associations, local government associations and community organisations.

The Council is supported in its role by the National Packaging Covenant Industry Association (NPCIA) that provides the services that implement the Covenant arrangements.

The National Packaging Covenant Industry Association (NPCIA)

The NPCIA is the legal entity established to coordinate industry's responsibilities under the Covenant. The NPCIA provides services to implement the Covenant's arrangements in accordance with the contract between the NPCIA and the jurisdictions.

The NPCIA is accountable to the Council for the delivery of a rolling 3-year business plan through which this strategic plan is implemented.

Vision

A community that manufactures, uses, distributes, and recovers packaging materials in a sustainable way.

Mission

To provide a system through which users of packaging materials and participants in the supply chain can voluntarily demonstrate leadership in:

- sustainable packaging design
- recovery and recycling of used packaging materials resulting in reduced waste and litter
- the engagement of all participants in the supply chain in the sustainable use of packaging materials.

Values

Council values:

- working in partnership with Government, industry and community organisations
- gathering and using knowledge as an evidence base for action
- innovation and active promotion of solutions at the systems level
- transparency and efficiency in performance.

Strategies To Achieve Covenant Goals: July 2010–June 2015

Background

Each goal focuses on a key area for action that will ensure that the Covenant's objective of minimising the environmental impact of packaging is achieved. Strategies in relation to one goal will also produce outcomes relating to other goals. The strategies, outcomes and targets in the Strategic Plan are based on and contribute to the achievements of the outcomes and targets in the Covenant

Goal 1: Design — packaging optimised to achieve resource efficiency and reduced environmental impact without compromising product quality and safety

Priority	Strategy	Outcomes sought	Targets (by June 2015, unless otherwise stated)
Sustainable Packaging Guidelines used to guide packaging decisions.	1. Capacity Building — Develop and implement capacity building activities to ensure the adoption and use of the Sustainable Packaging Guidelines by Covenant signatories.	Increased capacity by signatories to apply the Guidelines in packaging decisions.	70% of Covenant signatories have documented policies and procedures for evaluating and procuring packaging using the Sustainable Packaging Guidelines or equivalent.
	2. Audit — Design, test and implement a program to audit the use of the Sustainable Packaging Guidelines by signatories to the Australian Packaging Covenant.	All signatories shown to be applying the Guidelines in packaging decisions.	70% of Covenant signatories assessing 100% of new packaging and 50% of existing packaging against the Guideline.
	3. Complaints — Develop, implement and communicate a process to enable the community and other stakeholders to report items of packaging that appear to be contrary to the Sustainable Packaging Guidelines.	A well-communicated complaints process in place. All signatories applying the Guidelines in packaging decisions.	
	4. Incentive and recognition — Develop and implement a program or use an existing mechanism to recognise and promote significant achievements by Covenant signatories in designing and procuring packaging to improve its resource efficiency and reduce its environmental impact.	High performing signatories recognised and accomplishments shared with other signatories.	

Goal 2: Recycling — The efficient collection and recycling of packaging

Priority	Strategy	Outcomes Sought	Targets (by June 2015, unless otherwise stated)
Improved recycling rates for used packaging.	1. Workplace and Public Place Recycling — Extend the availability of workplace and public place recycling through investment in infrastructure and capacity building.	Improved recycling of packaging from away-from-home sources and households.	70% recycling rate for used packaging materials.
Increased local secondary markets for used packaging materials.	2. Market Development — Identify barriers, encourage ways in which they might be removed and new business opportunities that add value to recovered used packaging materials.	Increased local secondary markets for recovered packaging materials.	Demonstrated increase in the diversity and scale of local markets for the conversion of recovered and recycled used packaging to new products.
	3. Procurement — Build the capacity of Covenant signatories to develop and implement formal 'buy recycled' policies and programs.	Increase the amount of recycled packaging materials being used in Australian product manufacture.	All Covenant signatories will have a formal, implemented policy of buying recycled materials or products.
Improved quality of data collection and reporting.	4. Data Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and implement all agreed recommendations from past data investigations to improve data quality and accuracy. • Maintain and improve methodologies for the collection, reporting and analysis of data. 	Sound knowledge of and confidence in performance data (including key issues and trends).	Annual acquisition of high quality performance data.

Goal 3: Product Stewardship — a demonstrated commitment to product stewardship by the supply chain and other signatories

Priority	Strategy	Outcomes Sought	Targets (by June 2015, unless otherwise stated)
Improved collaboration between the supply and recovery chains.	<p>1. Collaboration — Through communication and investment encourage collaboration between participants in the supply and recovery chains in the design, procurement, recovery and recycling of packaging materials.</p>	<p>Covenant signatories in the supply and recovery chains working together to improve design and recycling of packaging.</p> <p>Packaging materials designed for sustainability; recovered and recycled at all points in the supply chain.</p>	<p>70% of Covenant signatories implementing formal policies and procedures in working with others to improve the design, procurement and recovery of packaging.</p>
Reduction in packaging materials being littered.	<p>2. Litter Data — Measure the distribution and types of used packaging materials in litter through an annual national litter survey.</p> <p>3. Litter Mitigation Infrastructure and Systems — Through communication and capacity building encourage innovation in infrastructure and systems that recover used packaging that would otherwise be littered or find its way into the littered waste stream.</p> <p>4. Litter Mitigation Education and Behaviour change — Support the implementation of education and compliance activities to reduce littered packaging in identified hot spots.</p>	<p>Reduced presence of used packaging materials in the littered waste stream.</p>	<p>Annual acquisition of high quality data on the quantity, types and distribution of packaging in the littered waste stream.</p> <p>Continuous reduction in the number of packaging items in litter.</p>

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Level 15, 28 Freshwater Place, Melbourne, Victoria, 3006
www.packagingcovenant.org.au

