

Contacts:

Lyn Mayes, The Packaging Forum  
Phone 021 471 261; [lynmayes@madworld.co.nz](mailto:lynmayes@madworld.co.nz)



## **Soft Plastic Recycling comes to Nelson and Marlborough**

### **70% New Zealanders now have access to soft plastic packaging recycling**

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The Packaging Forum today announced the expansion of the Love NZ soft plastic recycling programme across the South Island. Environment Minister Dr. Nick Smith joined representatives from industry, community groups and shoppers at New World Nelson to celebrate the industry-led recycling scheme which now reaches 70% New Zealanders.

Lyn Mayes, Project Manager told guests,

“We are delighted to launch soft plastics recycling in Nelson. This announcement means stores from Blenheim to Invercargill will have soft plastic recycling bins available. Uniquely, our retail partners will be using their own distribution networks to transport the collected materials back to Christchurch, unlike elsewhere in the country where we have set up dedicated collection networks. The ability of the retailers to transport the collected materials means we have been able to expand to regions such as Marlborough and Nelson, which would otherwise be too expensive to service. New World, PAK’nSAVE and Countdown stores will commence the service this month. In less than two years, we have reached our three year goal of making soft plastic recycling a reality for over 70% New Zealanders – we are incredibly proud of what we have achieved in a short space of time.”

Some of the key milestones include;

- Around eight tonnes of packaging is collected every week. This will increase with the Nelson and Marlborough and other South Island regions coming on board. Stores providing the service are listed on <http://www.recycling.kiwi.nz/solutions/soft-plastics/store-locator/>
- 6,000 tonnes of soft plastic packaging or 1.5 billion bags are consumed annually and the initiative is targeting a 7% recycling rate this year. In comparison, recycling of household flexible plastics in UK is estimated at around 3% (Source: Guardian UK).
- The most popular branded packaging collected are bread bags (21%); paper goods packaging (18%); and frozen food bags (14%).
- 55% of all bags we collect are unbranded including single use carrier bags, fresh produce and bakery bags, newspaper/magazine wrappers.

And it’s not just retail plastic bags and packaging that can be recycled through the programme.

Joanna Norris, South Island Editor in Chief, Fairfax Media says, “Tens of thousands of Fairfax newspapers are delivered every day to households across the Nelson and Marlborough region. To protect them from the elements they are wrapped in plastic which while the perfect solution for the customer, needs to be disposed of sustainably for the environment. The fact that soft plastics has come to the area is fantastic as it means Fairfax customers can now dispose of the bags sustainably at their local supermarket.”

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To mark the milestone, Mike Sammons, Sustainability Manager, Foodstuffs (NZ) Ltd joined the Member for Nelson, Hon Dr. Nick Smith to present a Bench made from 15,000 plastic bags to students at Victory School, Nelson.

“The scheme has brought together retailers, brands and packaging manufacturers to fund and promote the service. Our customers tell us they love its simplicity. Over the past 20 months, customers at New World and PAK’nSAVE stores have collected around 192 tonnes of soft plastic packaging which Replasturns into furniture and other durable plastic items. We need to create demand for these products and create New Zealand recycling solutions for soft plastics to sustain growth,” says Sammons.

The \$1.5 million programme has received \$700,000 from the Government’s Waste Minimisation Fund. In addition to funding from The Packaging Forum and the participating retailers, (The Warehouse, Foodstuffs and Countdown), the service is supported by Asaleo Care, Bluebird, Ceres, Coca Cola Amatil; Cottonsoft, Farrah’s; Farro Fresh, Fonterra, Frucor, George Weston Foods; Griffins, Goodman Fielder, Heinz Watties; Hubbards, Huckleberry, Kelloggs, Kathmandu; Kimberly-Clark, Lululemon; Mars, McCains, Mitre 10; Mondelez, Moore Wilson’s, Mother Earth, Mrs Rogers, Nestle, NZ Post, OOB; Pams, Pure Delish, Simplot, Spicers, Sunrice, Wrigley, Amcor, Coveris, Snell Packaging and Replas.

**For Information**

**The Packaging Forum** promotes the Love NZ brand under license from the Ministry for Environment.

<http://www.recycling.kiwi.nz/soft-plastics>