

# PACKAGING MANUFACTURERS + SUPPLIERS

## TOOLKIT



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## INTRODUCTION

In 2018, Australia established the 2025 National Packaging Targets (2025 Targets) to create a new sustainable pathway for the way we manage packaging in Australia. Packaging manufacturers and suppliers play a critical role in supporting Australian businesses in the creation, utilisation and supply of packaging. As Australia works towards ensuring all packaging is reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025, packaging manufacturers and suppliers have a vital role to play.

This resource has been prepared by the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) to help industry better understand the role and opportunities of packaging manufacturers and suppliers, and how these stakeholders will help Australia achieve the 2025 National Packaging Targets.

Please consider that the information provided within this document has been developed as a guide and is general in nature. It may not directly align with your organisation's capacities and capabilities as a packaging manufacturer or packaging supplier.

## PACKAGING VALUE CHAIN DEFINITIONS

Please note, for the purpose of this document the following definitions will be used:

- **Packaging manufacturers** are those who produce packaging products from raw materials and supply that product to their customers.
- **Packaging suppliers** are those who sell packaging products but do not make the product, for example, they import packaging products from overseas and sell these products in Australia.

This is to differentiate the different roles businesses can play if they manufacture the packaging themselves, or if they are purchasing already made packaging and selling this in the Australian marketplace. Figure 1 below shows the position of manufacturers and suppliers in the packaging supply chain.

Outside of this document, in many cases, organisations may be considered both a packaging manufacturer and supplier.

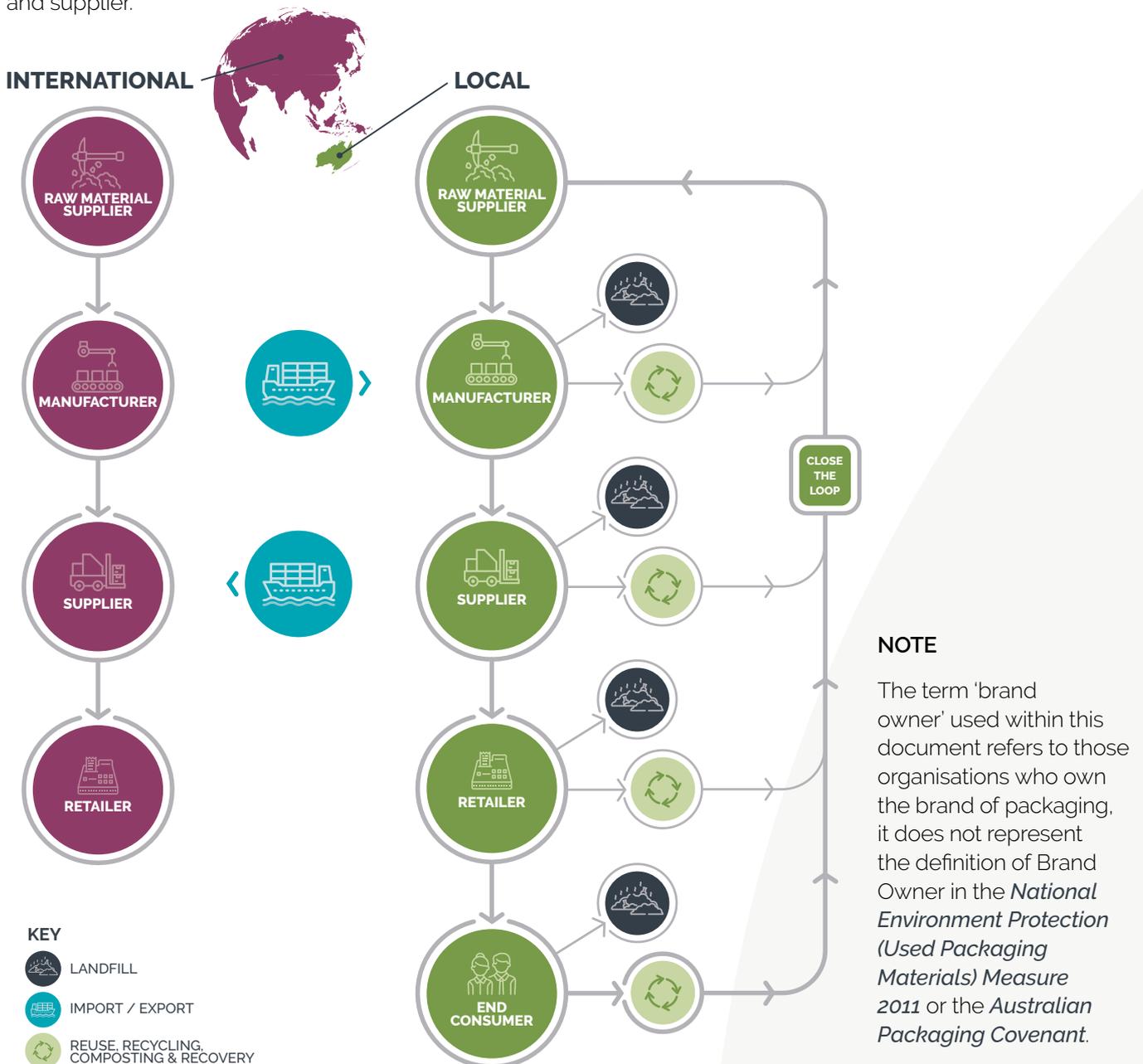
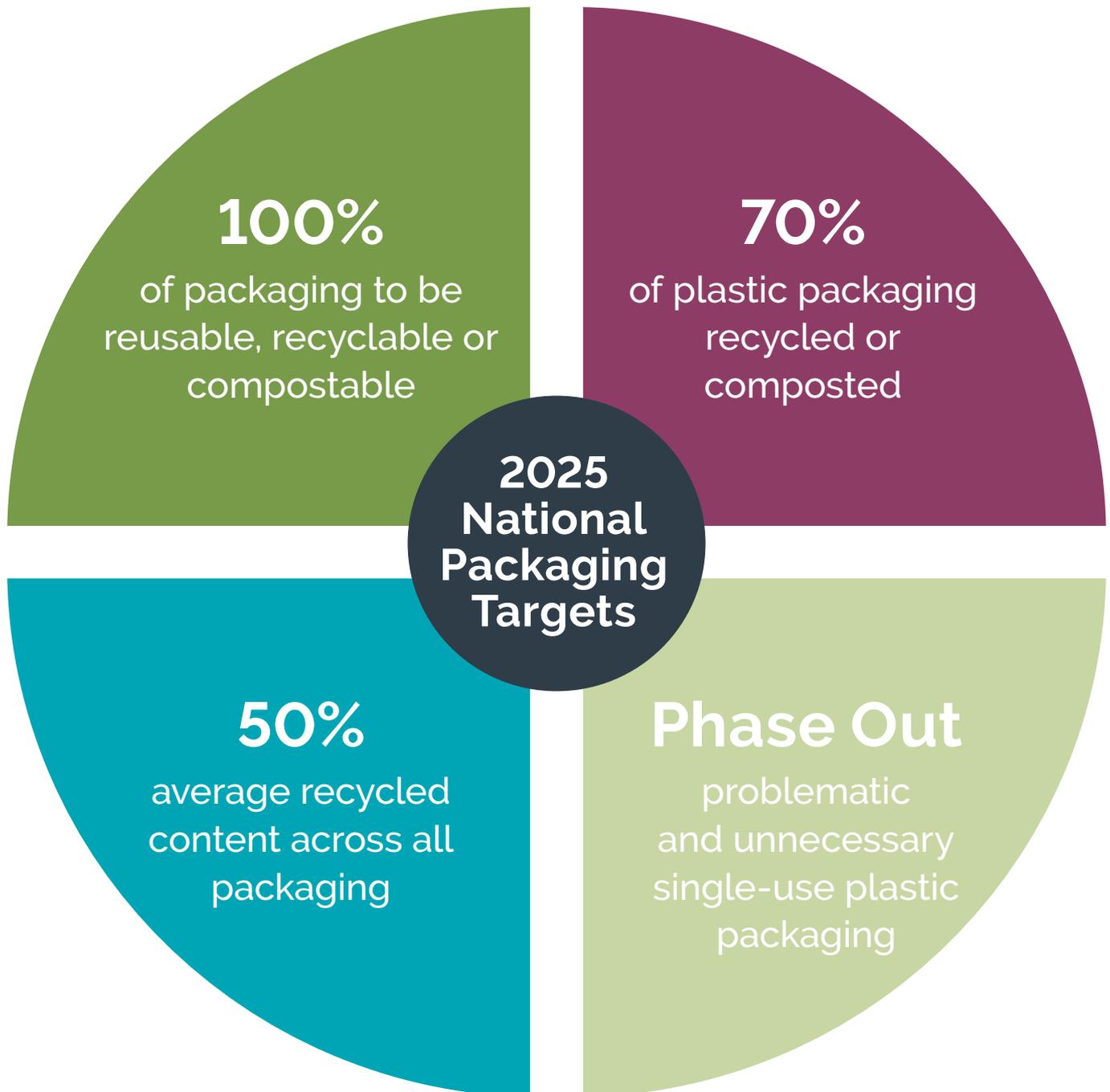


Figure 1: The packaging supply chain.

## THE ROLE OF PACKAGING MANUFACTURERS AND SUPPLIERS IN ACHIEVING THE 2025 NATIONAL PACKAGING TARGETS

Packaging manufacturers and packaging suppliers play an integral role in achieving the 2025 Targets (as shown in Figure 2).

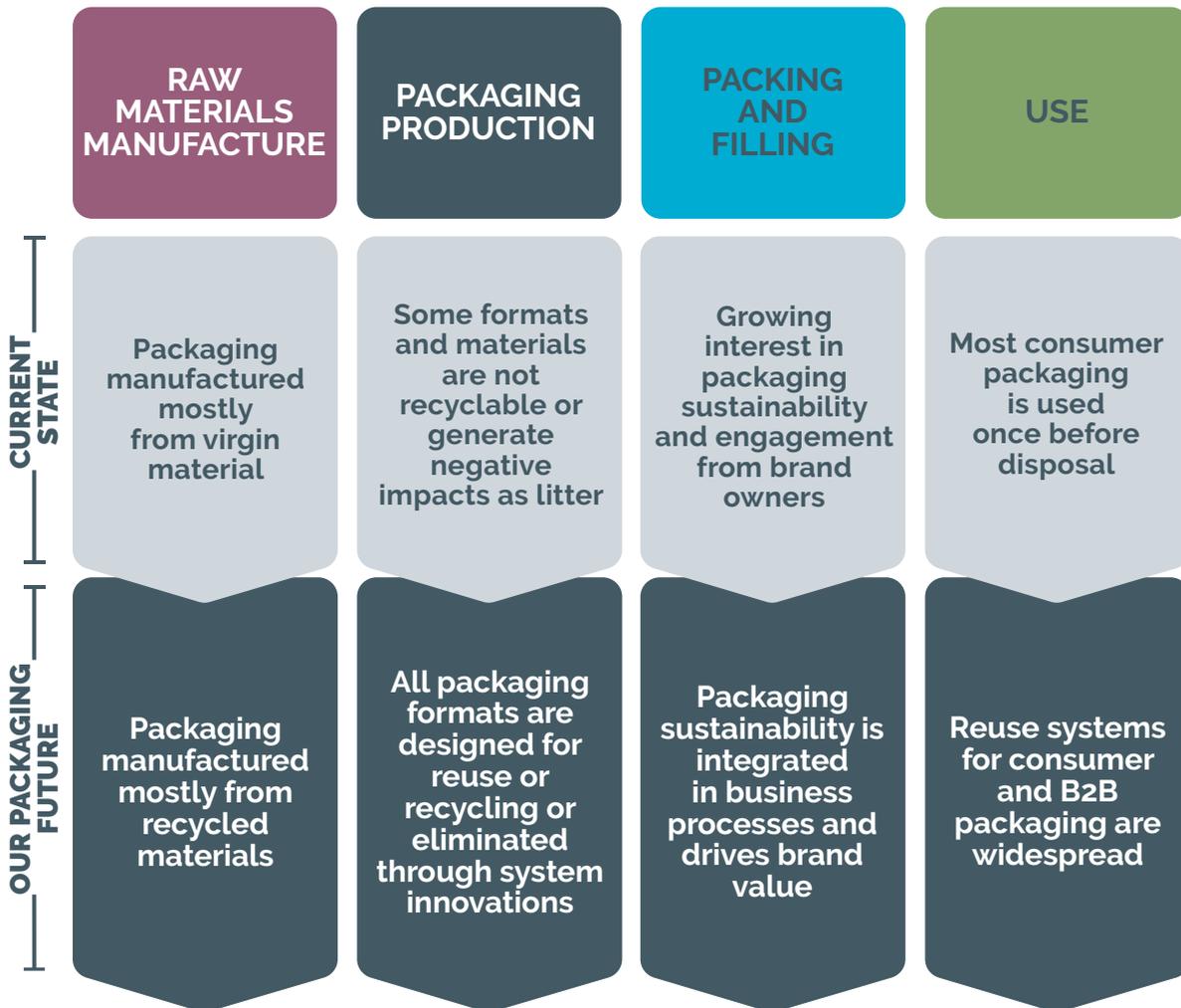


*Figure 2: The 2025 National Packaging Targets.*

As the producers and sellers of packaging into the Australian supply chain, it is essential that packaging manufacturers and packaging suppliers are aware of these targets and are actively working to ensure that the packaging they produce and sell meets these Targets by 2025.

*Our Packaging Future* outlines the opportunities and strategies open to businesses within the packaging value chain in working towards meeting the 2025 National Packaging Targets. Figure 3 below, an excerpt of a figure found in *Our Packaging Future*, shows the future packaging manufacturers and suppliers should aim for in the stages of:

- Raw materials manufacture
- Packaging production
- Packing and filling, and
- Use.



**Figure 3:** Adapted from Figure 5 *Transforming the packaging value chain from Our Packaging Future* (page 10), relevant to packaging manufacturers and packaging suppliers.

Click here to read  
**Our Packaging  
Future**



## Packaging Manufacturers

This section contains guidance and links to useful resources to help packaging manufacturers make informed choices when designing packaging that align with the 2025 Targets.

- Use the *Sustainable Packaging Guidelines* (SPGs) and the APCO Quickstart Guides when developing new products. Ensure that each of the 10 Sustainable Packaging Principles have been considered.
- Look at opportunities to incorporate recycled content where possible, to support the 2025 Target of 50% average recycled content across all packaging.
- Ensure packaging is made to be recoverable, i.e. can be reused, recycled or composted, at end-of-life. This will help support the 2025 Target of 100% of packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable.
- Ensure packaging produced is not considered to be 'problematic, unnecessary OR single-use plastic' according to APCO's definition. You can find this [here](#).
- To support *Strategy 1.4 Design for material recycling in Our Packaging Future*, packaging manufacturers should aim to develop new materials and formats to improve recyclability of soft plastics. The aim is to replace complex multi-material laminates with recyclable polyolefin-based (i.e. mainly polyethylene and polypropylene) materials.
- To support *Strategy 1.3 Increase the proportion of reusable packaging in Our Packaging Future*, supply chain alignment should occur with customers in order to make reusable B2B packaging viable.



## Packaging Suppliers

This section contains guidance and links to useful resources to help packaging suppliers make informed choices when procuring packaging that align with the 2025 Targets.

- Ensure review of packaging using the *Sustainable Packaging Guidelines* (SPGs) is a requirement in tenders.
- Ask the manufacturers of packaging to incorporate recycled materials where possible and where suitable.
- Ensure that the packaging you purchase and sell is made to be recoverable, i.e. can be reused, recycled or composted, at end-of-life. This will help support the 2025 Target of 100% of packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable.
- Ensure that the packaging you purchase and sell is not considered to be 'problematic, unnecessary OR single-use plastic' according to APCO's definition. You can find this [here](#).
- To support *Strategy 1.3 Increase the proportion of reusable packaging in Our Packaging Future*, supply chain alignment should occur with customers in order to make B2B reusable packaging viable.



## CASE STUDY

**BIOPAK PTY LTD**

Foodservice packaging manufacturer BioPak has played an active role in packaging sustainability in Australia. The BioPak team have participated in the APCO Working Groups and worked with the Australasian Bioplastics Association (ABA) to encourage the adoption of the seedling logo. BioPak also collaborate with the Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA) to divert food waste from landfill by offering a collection service for organic waste mixed with certified compostable packaging.

BioPak offers certified compostable packaging, part of the solution towards meeting the 2025 National Packaging Target of 100% of packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable. An initiative in which they demonstrate product stewardship is the compost collection service, offered to their customers where they connect customers with the organics recycling industry to facilitate the composting of their packaging. The BioPak Compost Service allows its customers to divert all of their food and BioPak packaging waste from landfill, offering this as either an ongoing or one-off service. This program helps support the 2025 Target of 70% of plastic packaging to be recycled or composted.



## THE ROLE OF PACKAGING MANUFACTURERS AND SUPPLIERS IN THE AUSTRALASIAN RECYCLING LABEL PROGRAM

The Australasian Recycling Label Program (the ARL Program) is a nationwide labelling program that provides designers and brand owners with the tools to inform responsible packaging design, and, help consumers to understand how to correctly dispose of packaging after use. Led by APCO, in collaboration with Planet Ark and PREP Design, the ARL Program aims to increase recycling and recovery rates and contribute to cleaner recycling streams.

APCO Members receive exclusive and free access to the two elements of the program - the Packaging Recyclability Evaluation Portal (PREP) and the Australasian Recycling Label (ARL).

## Packaging Recyclability Evaluation Portal (PREP)

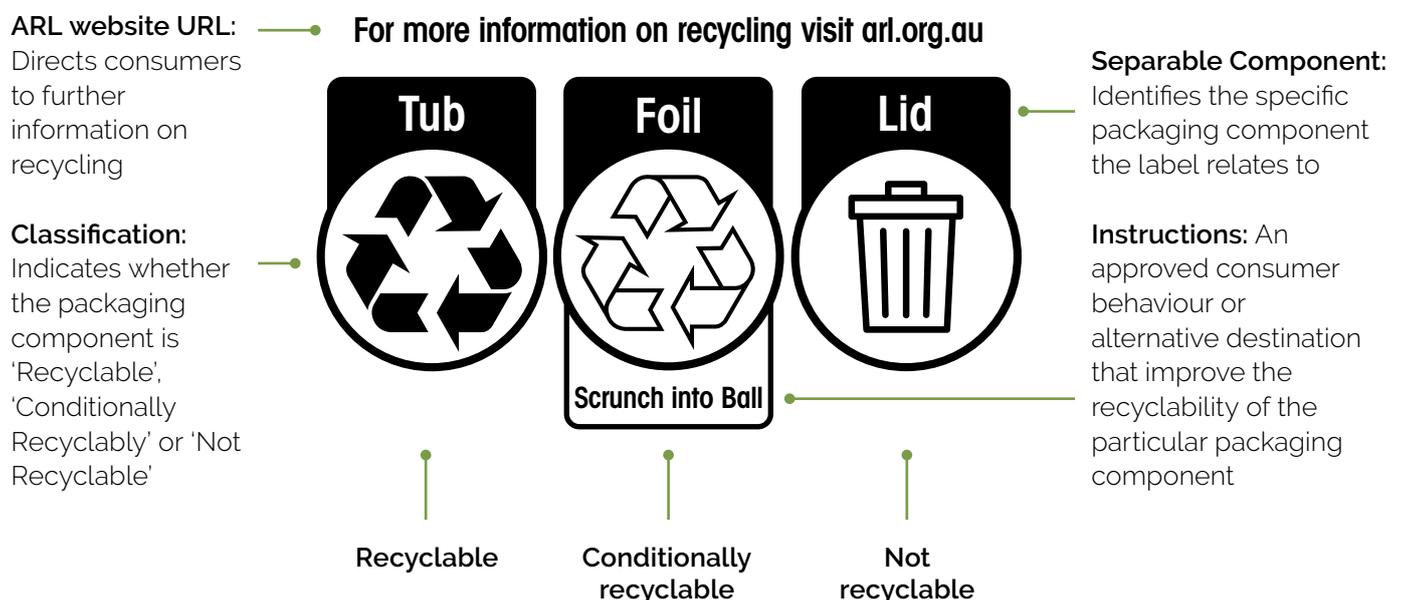
The first element of the ARL Program is PREP. PREP provides a way for brand owners, manufacturers and designers to assess whether an item of packaging could be classified as 'recyclable' through household kerbside collection in Australia and New Zealand. PREP takes into account how widespread the collection services are for the item as well as how the item will behave in a Material Recycling Facility (MRF) and subsequent processing facilities such as paper mills and aluminium smelters.

Organisations create projects within PREP to assess the recyclability of each separable component of packaging included. By combining access to collection services and technical recyclability, PREP provides the evidence required to apply the ARL on-pack.

To check out PREP,  
head to [prep.org.au](http://prep.org.au)

## Australasian Recycling Label (ARL)

The second element of the program is the ARL, an on-pack label which businesses can use once they have completed a PREP assessment. The ARL provides clear and accurate instructions that empower consumers to dispose of their packaging correctly. The ARL removes confusion and reduces waste by educating consumers on how to dispose of every separable component of packaging, an example of which can be viewed in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4:** An example of grouped ARL symbols, showing the elements of the ARL.

Under the ARL Program, the brand owner for the product, upon which the packaging is used, is responsible for application of the ARL and the tracking and reporting of the ARL. These responsibilities are detailed in the ARL Terms and Conditions.

Packaging manufacturers and suppliers using PREP are highly encouraged to let their customers know they are part of the ARL Program and support these brand owners in utilising the program. Packaging manufacturers and suppliers who have assessed their packaging through PREP are able to showcase these results to their customers through information packs, EDMs and marketing content. The Resource Toolkit for Packaging Manufacturers provides *further detail here*.

## Packaging manufacturer and packaging supplier responsibilities

- The manufacturer of the packaging is responsible for providing the correct material specifications to the customer (the brand owner) who will be using PREP and the ARL for that packaging format.
- The packaging specifications must provide all details of the packaging format to ensure the brand owner is undertaking an accurate PREP evaluation and incorrect labelling is avoided.
- Packaging manufacturers who are APCO Members can access PREP if they have agreed to the PREP Terms & Conditions.
- If a packaging manufacturer also produces own brand products, they are able to do a PREP report for their own organisation and apply the ARL on-pack if they have agreed to the ARL Terms & Conditions – this would mean that also meet the responsibilities of a brand owner (as shown below).

## Responsibilities for those packaging manufacturers and packaging suppliers who also produce their own branded products

- Must be a compliant APCO Member and have agreed to both PREP & ARL Terms and Conditions.
- Responsible for inputting packaging specifications from packaging manufacturers into their own PREP evaluation, ensuring all components for the final product are accounted for.
- PREP evaluation to be saved on-file, along with any official Exemption Letter(s), for audit purposes.
- Must ensure the ARL to be applied on-pack aligns with the PREP evaluation outcome
- ARL must be applied as per the ARL Style Guide requirements, and they are responsible for communicating and passing resources to designers and labelling teams (internal & external).
- The brand owner is responsible for tracking all ARL applications that go to market to be reported to APCO annually.

## CASE STUDY

# DETMOLD PACKAGING PTY LTD **DETMOLD GROUP**

The Detmold Group is an active Member of APCO, participating in APCO Working Groups, presenting at APCO events & being involved in the ARL Program.

The Detmold Group validates its approach to designing for the maximum potential of packaging life through use of the SPGs, with which it reviews and innovates product designs. This ensures all packaging is optimised to make efficient use of resources, as well as reducing environmental impact, without compromising on functionality, quality and safety.

Collaboration is at the core of translating these principals into results for customers. Detpak and PaperPak as part of the Detmold Group work actively with customers, suppliers, local industry and educators to provide a transparent design approach. The Detmold Group endorse the principals of designing for available recovery systems, and utilise PREP as a means for product design for recycling primarily where they are valuable to a circular economy and notably can access the ARL. The aim is to achieve the highest potential environmental value. In addition, as part of its service to customers, assessments are provided based on the 2025 Targets, including recommendations to increase the amount of recycled content where possible.



## THE ROLE OF PACKAGING MANUFACTURERS AND SUPPLIERS IN SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS WITH APCO OBLIGATIONS

APCO Brand Owner Members, also known as Signatories to the *Australian Packaging Covenant*, have a series of obligations they must meet to remain compliant. As packaging manufacturers and suppliers are also Brand Owner Members, they too must meet these obligations.

Outlined below are some recommendations on how packaging manufacturers and suppliers can support their customers in their obligations, and work together to improve both the customer's and their own packaging sustainability outcomes.

## Packaging Manufacturers

- Use the *Sustainable Packaging Guidelines* (SPGs) and the APCO Quickstart Guides when developing new products. Ensure that each of the 10 Sustainable Packaging Principles have been considered.
- Provide the following information to customers who are APCO Members for their APCO Annual Reporting:
  - Weights of materials used within the packaging.
  - Amount of recycled content within the packaging.
  - Detail on any renewable materials used within the packaging.
- Actively encourage customers who are not currently APCO Members to consider joining APCO.
- Conduct regular face-to-face meetings to share information and ideas for improvement with your customers.

## Packaging Suppliers

- Ensure review of packaging using the *Sustainable Packaging Guidelines* (SPGs) is a requirement in tenders.
- Provide the following information to customers who are APCO Members for their APCO Annual Reporting:
  - Weights of materials using within the packaging.
  - Amount of recycled content within the packaging.
  - Detail on any renewable materials used within the packaging.
- Actively encourage customers who are not currently APCO Members to consider joining APCO.
- Conduct regular face-to-face meetings to share information and ideas for improvement with your customers.

## RESOURCES

### Design Guidelines

- *Sustainable Packaging Guidelines (SPGs)*
  - *Quickstart guide to design for recovery: reuse, recycling or composting*
  - *Quickstart guide to labelling for recovery*
  - *Quickstart guide to designing for recyclability: PET packaging*
  - *Quickstart guide to designing for recyclability: glass packaging*
- *Considerations for Compostable Plastic Packaging*
  - Includes a decision tree for packaging manufacturers
- *Single-Use, Problematic and Unnecessary Plastic Packaging*

### Strategic documents to be familiar with

- *Our Packaging Future*
- For more information on the 2025 National Packaging Targets, visit the *APCO website*

### ARL Program

- *Packaging Recyclability Evaluation Portal (PREP)*
  - Not already using PREP? Primary contacts can agree to the PREP Terms and Conditions via the *APCO Member Centre*.

### Newsletters

- APCO Members receive the Member Monthly Update – a Member newsletter that is sent to primary and secondary contacts at the end of each month. Keep an eye out for this in your inbox, as it provides an array of information including resources, links to register for events and webinars, updates on APCO's programs and projects, and much more.
- If you're interesting in keeping up to date with APCO's newsletter to external stakeholders, you can sign up for *APCO UnPacked*.

### Member Centre

- The *APCO Member Centre* is exclusive to APCO Members. It is your gateway to achieving packaging sustainability. A hub for accessing APCO programs and educational resources.



To contact APCO please visit our website  
[www.apco.org.au](http://www.apco.org.au)

