

Tara Cheyne MLA

Manager of Government Business
Attorney-General
Minister for Human Rights
Minister for City and Government Services
Minister for the Night-Time Economy

Member for Ginninderra

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
Questions on Notice Paper No 3
Friday, 7 March 2025
Question No. 195

MS CLAY: To ask the Minister for City and Government Services —

1. Which of the listed items will the new recycling facility recycle, (a) soft plastics smaller than a credit card, (b) soft plastics larger than a credit card, (c) hard plastics larger than a credit card, (d) hard plastics smaller than a credit card, (e) paper larger than a credit card, (f) paper smaller than a credit card, (g) householder batteries, (h) disposable coffee cups and if so, which kind, (i) aluminium cans, (j) liquid paperboard products, (k) disposable drink lids, (l) bamboo plates and cutlery, (m) bioplastic plates and cutlery, (n) medicine blister packs, (o) standard composite materials used in supermarket packaging, (p) plastic takeaway food containers, (q) plastic bags, (r) wax or plastic lined paper containers (such as for takeaway) and (s) any other standard items of supermarket packaging that are not included in parts (a) to (r).
2. For each items listed in part (1) that will not be recycled, when will national product stewardship ensure that these items are no longer manufactured or sold or that they are recycled with industry paying the costs of recycling.
3. When will these items be recycled through national product stewardship.
4. What is the consequence if a manufacturer or retailer chooses not to participate in voluntary regulation, given that the product stewardship scheme will be voluntary.

Ms Tara Cheyne MLA – The answer to the Member’s questions are as follows:

1. The New Recycling Facility (NRF) will operate as a recovery facility and will be able to sort paper and cardboard, glass, plastic, steel and aluminium. Please refer to QON 1923 from Notice Paper No 42 (10th Assembly) for responses to the question’s sub-points (a to r).
2. For the items in response to question 1 that will not be recovered by the NRF, details are provided below around national product stewardship arrangements.
 - a) Currently, no established product stewardship schemes exist for:
 - a. Disposable coffee cups.

- b. Plates, cutlery, and takeaway containers that are made from bioplastic, bamboo, or wax/plastic-lined paper. However single-use plates and cutlery made with plastic are already banned in the ACT – this includes bioplastic and plastic-lined versions.
 - c. Soft plastics, hard plastics and paper smaller than a credit card.
 - b) Household batteries – B-cycle is an existing voluntary national battery product stewardship scheme for household batteries, run by the Battery Stewardship Council. B-cycle receives funding from industry partners to fund recycling and provide collection services for end-of-life batteries. At the December 2024 Environment Ministers Meeting (EMM), Ministers also discussed progression of aligned State-led reforms for mandatory battery product stewardship, recognising the need to act quickly to reduce the risk of battery fires.
 - c) Liquid paperboard products – containers bearing the 10c refund mark such as juice boxes can already be recycled through the ACT CDS.
 - d) Medicine blister packs – Pharmacycle is a voluntary recycling program for household and commercial medicinal blister pack waste. Empty medicinal blister packs can be dropped off at participating pharmacies nationwide for free, including in Canberra.
 - e) Plastic bags – most types of single-use plastic bags are now a banned item in the ACT. For sacks and bulk bags over 15kg/l, there is a product stewardship scheme called Big Bag Recovery. This program only includes recyclable bags made of woven polypropylene and low-density polyethylene.
 - f) Supermarket packaging – at the October 2022 EMM, Ministers agreed to reform packaging regulations to ensure that all packaging in Australia is designed to be recovered, reused, recycled, and reprocessed safely in line with circular economy principles. Packaging design obligations will be mandated, to make industry responsible for the packaging they place on the market.
 - g) Soft plastics – Australian governments have agreed to develop a pathway to collect and recycle soft plastics at scale, that is supported by improved packaging design and the reduction in the use of problematic and unnecessary soft plastics. Soft Plastic Stewardship Australia, established in late 2024, is also working to re-establish a soft plastics recycling scheme for Australia. The National Plastics Recycling Scheme, led by the Australian Food and Grocery Council aims to drive investment into new recycling technologies across Australia, to turn hard-to-recycle soft plastics into new products.
3. This information is not known at this time.
4. There are no compliance consequences for a manufacturer or retailer that chooses not to participate in a non-mandatory scheme, given they are voluntary.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.


Tara Cheyne MLA

Minister for City and Government Services

Date: 2/4/25

This response required 8 hrs and 5 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$606.40