



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **PLASTICS SUMMIT: OPPORTUNITY FOR REAL ACTION NOT RHETORIC**

The Prime Minister's Plastics Summit on Monday at Parliament House is real environmental leadership and an unprecedented opportunity to reduce Australia's plastics and greenhouse gas footprint through better recycling, according to the Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR), the peak body for the \$20 billion resource recovery sector.

"Prime Minister Morrison and his Ministerial colleagues have acted with total clarity and fast pace to put plastic waste minimisation near the top of their agenda. With all the key players there and the community watching, the Summit is the big chance to put the meat of real change on the political bones, and we are optimistic that will happen," Pete Shmigel, ACOR CEO, who will Chair a Summit session, said.

"A Summit that puts substance before stylistics is what we need to deal with the plastics problem, including our comparatively very low recycling rate of some 12% and our lack of domestic recycling capacity.

"A recent report for the Commonwealth found the need to increase domestic plastic recycling by 400% in the next five years to meet the targets the packaging supply chain has promised in the recently adopted National Waste Policy, as well as the provisions of upcoming bans on the international movement of collected plastic for recycling.

"Improving plastic recycling is an affordable and accessible way for all of us to take practical and positive climate action. Support for putting recycled content plastic into irrigation pipes, channel lining and rainwater tanks would be a great way to assist drought-proofing while supporting Australian manufacturers.

"From all players involved in plastics management, from the Government to brand owners to recyclers to the community, it's time for real action, not rhetoric, and that's what the Summit will be judged by.

"While banning some types of plastic products is understandable, such as single use imported items, the fact is we cannot ban all plastics as many serve very positive purposes. Therefore, we need to get smarter with the plastic we do use, especially ensuring its

recyclability and that plastic products are made with lower-emissions, domestically sourced recycled resin ASAP.

"Our sector is stepping up. In the last six months, we have invested in developing or upgrading some six plastics reprocessing facilities in Australia. Several have seen State Government support to achieve their environmental and jobs benefits. That is very important and welcome," Shmigel said.

ACOR believes the following moves would positively improve plastic recycling:

- Co-funding arrangements in plastics collection, sorting, washing, flaking and reprocessing technology;
- Publicly available and accountable product stewardship commitments by brand owners to domestically-sourced recycled content products, including cost sharing;
- Market development for new generation plastic recycled content products, such as in drought-proofing, construction and roads;
- Specific and visible promises by the Commonwealth - as a massive purchaser of goods - to recycled content (as long established elsewhere such as the USA);
- Improved labelling for consumers about plastic recyclability and recycled content and increased community take-back opportunities for soft plastics, such as via CDS schemes;
- Economic incentives to level the playing field with low-cost Asian manufacturers in plastics reprocessing, such as tax or energy credits (which now exist in France and the UK), or extending GST exemption for second hand goods to recycle.

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