

Media Release

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COLES HORSHAM CEMENTS AUSTRALIAN-FIRST SOFT PLASTICS RECYCLING TECHNOLOGY

Coles has partnered with Victorian recycling organisations RED Group and Replas to pioneer and install a concrete slab carpark made partly out of recycled soft plastics.

Under installation at Coles Horsham, the carpark is the first commercial construction project in Australia to make use of Polyrok – a sustainable alternative to aggregate minerals used in concrete, such as stone.

Made from plastic bags and soft plastic packaging recovered from the REDcycle program, Polyrock has the potential to divert 105,000 tonnes of soft plastics from landfill each year, if used in commercial concrete projects across Australia.

Coles State Construction Manager Victoria Fiona Lloyd said this was the first time the product had been used in a commercial environment.

“As one of Australia’s largest food retailers, we know how important it is to support initiatives that help to close the loop with soft plastics,” she said.

“This project alone will help repurpose approximately 900,000 pieces of soft plastic, to be used in the carpark at the soon-to-be-completed Coles Horsham redevelopment.

“We’ve worked with RED Group, Replas and RMIT University throughout the whole development process and we’re excited to see how we can use this technology in more of our stores.”

Replas Joint Managing Director Mark Jacobsen said: “Coles, Replas and RED Group are leading the way on recycling the soft plastics that are returned to Coles supermarkets. This new carpark will be built using Polyrok, a sustainable alternative to mineral aggregate in concrete, made from the soft plastic packaging returned to REDcycle bins at Coles.

“Polyrok reduces the carbon footprint due to the reduced thermal mass it provides. This tackles the plastic problem and climate change all while being fit for purpose. If innovative products like this were adopted in all buildings and car parks, the collective reduction in greenhouse gasses would be enormous.”

Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management, Trevor Evans welcomed the collaboration to find innovative and practical ways to reuse soft plastics.

“There is huge potential and opportunity for infrastructure projects to help us build a more circular economy,” Assistant Minister Evans said.

“This is why the Federal Government has prioritised the development of new national standards and guidelines to encourage the use of recycled content in roads and other projects.”

This innovation comes as Coles celebrates National Recycling Week with other initiatives being launched this week including a new food waste diversion project in Queensland and new sustainability features at Coles latest supermarket in Chatswood, New South Wales.

Coles has worked with REDcycle since 2011, becoming the first major Australian supermarket to have REDcycle bins in every supermarket. Since the partnership began, Coles and its customers have diverted over 1.3 billion pieces of soft plastic from landfill.

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