

Press Release

REMONDIS Australia plays leading role in groundbreaking Big Bag Recovery Product Stewardship Scheme

Sydney, 2 February 2022, REMONDIS Australia – REMONDIS Australia (REMONDIS) is managing the logistics of a new Product Stewardship Scheme that will take large plastic bag recycling to a new level, at a time when some 40,000 garbage truck loads of large plastic bags are going to landfill each year.

As the sole logistics and collection partner for the Big Bag Recovery Product Stewardship Scheme (Big Bag Recovery), REMONDIS is tasked with collecting, sorting, counting and baling polypropylene and low-density polyethylene bulk bags and sacks.

Big Bags are the bags that carry products and ingredients to all sectors of industry and our backyards - things like fertiliser, seeds, animal feeds, flour, salt, sugar, milk powders, sand, gravel, mulch and cement.

Once captured, the bags are processed into re-usable resin pellets, for re-manufacture into new products such as school seats or as feedstock for advanced recycling into high-tech uses such as batteries.

A priority for REMONDIS is identifying industries and regions across Australia where these bags and sacks are used, ahead of the staged establishment of drop-off points at local council, community group and commercial locations to maximise recovery. This will involve extensive liaison with industry and local government.

REMONDIS' in-house digital development team is developing an innovative app to assist with coordination. This will be pivotal for a large network of contractors who will be the backbone of the program, and relied on to maximise reclaim rates.

The Big Bag Recovery Program is a voluntary Product Stewardship Scheme for all businesses (known as brand owners) with Environment, Social and Governance as a core focus who package products in big bags, to ensure responsible and quantifiable outcomes are achieved.

Previously, Australia has exported a large proportion of used big bags to other countries for disposal, with many ending up in landfill. With these countries now deciding to restrict these types of imports and Australia recently implementing its own export restrictions, pressure has mounted for sustainable home-grown solutions.

Some 60,000 tonnes of big bags are used in Australia each year, with a large percentage ending up in landfill, burnt or buried on farms – or 40,000 garbage truck loads. That comes at a cost of more than \$150 million per year in landfill replacement and environmental management costs, and creates the equivalent of nearly six million tonnes in CO₂ – also the equivalent of nearly 900,000 cars on the road.

“As a global leader in waste management and sustainability, REMONDIS is honoured to play a leading role in the ground-breaking Big Bag Recovery scheme,” said **Julian Ryan**, Senior Project Manager with REMONDIS Australia's Integrated and Managed Services division.

“Through industry leadership, cooperation and common sense, we can make a staggering difference in terms of giving these bags a second life, thereby reducing landfill.”

Managing Director of Industry Waste Recovery, **Stephen Richards**, who established Big Bag Recovery, said the scheme embodies ‘circular economy’ best practice.

“This is a responsibility-based industry-led scheme, with massive environmental and social benefits as the end result,” Mr Richards said.

“Pulling together businesses, consumers and collectors takes a lot of work and cooperation, but also provides the opportunity to maximise the plastic as a re-usable resource, many times over.

“It’s about actions and outcomes that are measured, achievable, shared and repeatable.

“We’re particularly pleased to have partnered with globally-respected REMONDIS to take the scheme to the next level.”

Anyone wishing to establish a big bag collection point can call REMONDIS on 1300 424 422 or email info@bigbagrecovery.com.au. Big Bag Recovery is interested in hearing from any business, council or community group who may wish to be involved in the scheme.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

BIG BAG RECOVERY / INDUSTRY WASTE RECOVERY GROUP Big Bag Recovery (BBR) is a private enterprise, and part of the Industry Waste Recovery group, a band of industry leaders and product stewardship professionals focussed on better waste management and recycling practices. Operating since 2015, the Industry Waste Recovery group is dedicated to delivering environmental and social outcomes that are truly sustainable. The team has more than 80 years experience in environmental and operational management. Farm Waste Recovery program was incorporated into Big Bag Recovery in October 2021, ahead of the partnering with REMONDIS Australia to oversee collection, sorting, counting and baling.

REMONDIS is one of the world’s largest privately run recycling, service and water companies with around 900 business locations in over 30 countries and across four continents. Founded in 1934, this family-run business employs more than 38,000 people and generates a turnover of €8.3 billion (2020). Each year, it processes more than 30 million tonnes of recyclable materials and provides services for local authorities, small and medium-sized businesses and industrial firms as well as for around 30 million people. Operating in many different fields of business, REMONDIS makes an important contribution towards protecting the environment and conserving natural resources – from recovering valuable raw materials from industrial and household waste, to producing high quality recycled raw materials, all the way through to transforming non-recyclable materials into a range of different fuels. Moreover, the company is increasingly helping to advance the switch from fossil fuels to renewables by using biomass as a source of energy. REMONDIS sees itself as an adviser and point of contact for industrial, commercial and retail businesses as well as for local authorities as it helps them to find regional and bespoke solutions. **REMONDIS Australia** commenced operations in 1982 and now has 800+ employees servicing more than 15,000 customers nationally.



WORKING FOR THE FUTURE

REMONDIS IMS is REMONDIS Australia's Integrated and Managed Services division, Australia's largest environmental managed services provider. It specialises in the comprehensive management of waste, recycling and commodity streams, site remediation and special environmental projects to large organisations and major infrastructure projects across Australia and New Zealand. It focusses on safety and compliance, value, innovation, and cost reduction strategies, aligned to your organisational goals and sustainability targets.

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