

Final report

2025 Red Meat Packaging Stewardship

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Abstract

The purpose of the project was to provide MLA with strategic advice and support in developing and implementing a collaborative communication plan to create awareness of legislative and regulatory changes that may create a cause for change for the Australian Red Meat Industry including a high level stakeholder engagement plan, facilitating an online Red Meat Product Stewardship workshop as well as revise and update the Red Meat Packaging Stewardship framework.

The Communication/Stakeholder Engagement plan outlined who, how and when Meat Livestock Australia would engage with red meat industry producers and processors on product stewardship schemes and actions to responsibly address the socio-environmental impacts of the red meat industry including packaging and on farm waste management and circularity. As well as create awareness of legislative and regulatory changes that many create a cause for change for the Australian Red Meat Industry (including, but not limited to, emerging market access technical non-tariff trade barriers which may relate to the use of plastics).

Executive summary

Background

The purpose of the project was to provide MLA with strategic advice and support in developing and implementing a collaborative communication plan to create awareness of legislative and regulatory changes that may create a cause for change for the Australian Red Meat Industry including a high level stakeholder engagement plan, facilitating an online Red Meat Product Stewardship workshop as well as revise and update the Red Meat Packaging Stewardship framework.

Objectives

To provide strategic advice and support to deliver the following:

1. Develop a high-level stakeholder engagement plan.
2. Support facilitation of Red Meat Packaging forums/workshops
3. Support the revision of the Red Meat Packaging Stewardship framework
4. Assist with the development of a collaborative communication plan to support outcomes of the next steps / future planning identified by the stakeholders and agreed by MLA

Methodology

Develop and assist with the implementation of a collaborative communication plan to engage with internal and external stakeholders on both packaging and on-farm stewardship.

More specifically:

- The red meat packaging supply chain through the Packing Forum on upcoming federal government and Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) packaging legislative and regulatory reforms as well as including packaging formats, eco-modulation, reporting, collection and recycling opportunities locally and overseas.
- Existing product stewardship schemes to explore collaboration opportunities that will support on farm stewardship activities such as managing agriculture plastic waste, used tyres, batteries, agricultural and veterinary chemicals and their packaging.

- Red meat producers and processors on how they can better manage agriculture plastic waste, used tyres, batteries, agricultural and veterinary chemicals and their packaging.

Results/key findings

Facilitated a red meat packaging supply chain stakeholder forum on eco-modulation and its application from a packaging stewardship perspective, including what is being proposed by APCO, how eco-modulation has been applied globally, why and how eco-modulation can drive environmentally positive changes in the manufacture, use and recovery of used packaging.

Facilitated one on one meetings between MLA and Senior executives from multiple existing product stewardship schemes including Tyres Stewardship Australia, B-Cycle, AgSafe (Drum Muster and Big Bag Recovery). Two potential collaborative opportunities were identified in improving awareness and management of on farm tyre and battery waste for further consideration in 2026.

Developed and published *A Practical Guide to Managing On Farm Waste* that provides practical actions producers can take to reduce, reuse and properly dispose of waste streams commonly found on farming enterprises by working with product stewardship schemes for tyres, oils, batteries, silage wrap, agricultural and veterinary chemicals and containers, agricultural plastics bags, lighting and solar panels. The guide was developed in close consultation with the relevant product stewardship schemes.

Benefits to industry

Improved understanding of current packaging challenges, opportunities, regulatory reforms and implications for industry. Continued collaboration across the entire red meat packaging supply chain on understanding and addressing packaging challenges, regulatory reforms and potential solutions. Identification of pathways to increase packaging sustainability

Increased awareness of red meat producers and processors on how they can better manage on farm waste including for tyres, oils, batteries, silage wrap, agricultural and veterinary chemicals and containers, agricultural plastics bags, lighting and solar panels.

The opportunity to collaborate with a number of existing stewardship schemes on improving awareness and management of on farm tyre and battery waste including understanding the challenges of managing these waste streams in rural and remote areas and how to improve awareness, participation and access for red meat producers and processors.

Future research and recommendations

Continue to engage with Red Meat Packaging Supply Chain through the Stewardship Forum on government policy and regulations, and global packaging trends and regulations. Review and update the Red Meat Packing Stewardship Framework in response to changing government policies and innovations in packaging design. Explore potential collaboration opportunities including producer surveys and on farm collection trials with existing stewardship schemes to improve management of on farm tyre, battery, agricultural plastic and solar panel waste.

Table of contents

Abstract	2
Executive summary	2
1. Background	5
2. Objectives.....	5
3. Methodology	5
4. Results	6
5. Conclusion	7
6. Future research and recommendations.....	7

1. Background

The purpose of the project is two fold. Firstly, to continue to engage with stakeholders across the red meat packaging supply chain on the ongoing development, refinement and implementation of the red meat packaging stewardship framework that addresses the current packaging challenges and regulatory reforms facing the Australian red meat industry. Secondly, to engage with red meat producers and processors and existing product stewardship schemes on how to better manage on-farm waste including tyres, oils, batteries, silage wrap, agricultural and veterinary chemicals and containers, agricultural plastics bags, lighting and solar panels.

The Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence (the Centre) Centre is an independent, not-for-profit [registered charity](#), that seeks to reduce the environmental and social impacts of products by activating circularity and producer responsibility across the entire product lifecycle.

It works with brands, manufacturers, retailers, industry associations, product stewardship organisations (existing and emerging) and governments across Australia design sustainable products, prolong the life and value of products and materials, and maximise the use of renewable, restorative, regenerative and recycled materials.

The Centre has extensive experience across industries and sectors in:

- designing and implementing product stewardship schemes,
- advising businesses on their producer responsibilities across the lifecycle,
- investigating and analysing product stewardship/ extended producer responsibility policies, regulations and actions locally and globally,
- providing independent advice on product stewardship priorities to all levels of government based on foundational studies including the [Benefits and Effectiveness of Product Stewardship](#) in partnership with the UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures.

A collaborative approach engaging key industry stakeholders is required to support the ongoing development and implementation of a red meat stewardship programme that considers potential implications on productivity, consumer sentiment and possible market access technical non-tariff imposts.

2. Objectives

To provide strategic advice and support to deliver the following:

1. Develop a high-level stakeholder engagement plan.
2. Support facilitation of Red Meat Packaging forums/workshops
3. Support the revision of the Red Meat Packaging Stewardship framework
4. Assist with the development of a collaborative communication plan to support outcomes of the next steps / future planning identified by the stakeholders and agreed by MLA

5. Methodology

The project provided a \$30k investment in a Strategic Partnership Program to support the ongoing development and implementation for industry collaboration on Red Meat Packaging Stewardship and On Farm Product Stewardship where the Centre will:

- work with MLA in developing a collaborative communication plan to raise awareness and engage internal and external stakeholders across the red meat supply chain on Packaging and On Farm Stewardship schemes and actions.
- facilitate engagement with the red meat packaging supply chain stakeholders through the Packaging Stewardship Forum on the implementation of the Red Meat Packaging Stewardship Framework, government policy and regulatory reforms and packaging innovation
- identify existing stewardship schemes (e.g. Tyre Stewardship Australia, Battery Stewardship Council, Drum Muster, Big Bag Recovery) that producers and processors can work with managing on farm waste and facilitate meetings between these schemes and the MLA to explore opportunities for collaboration and support.
- produce a practice note/ online resource (in close consultation with the relevant product stewardship schemes) for producers and processors that provides information on what product stewardship is, what current product stewardship schemes exist, how producers and processors can participate and collaborate with these schemes, and what reporting on impact is available

As part of this investment, additional benefits and services were provided by Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence and made available to MLA such as:

- Strategic advice and support from Centre team (bimonthly meetings)
- Opportunity to contribute to Centre publications and participate in Centre events
- Free access to the Centre publications and webinars
- Discounts on Online training modules available to MLA staff
- Free tickets (8) to an annual Centre networking event
- Collaboration / partnership posts (6) on Centre LinkedIn page developed in association with MLA.
- MLA logo (large) recognition on Centre website Partner Page, webinars (start and end), events (either on banner or onscreen at start and end)
- MLA logo (large) recognition on Centre EDMs (in footer).
- Use of Centre logo for preapproved purposes

6. Results

The Centre supported the MLA and facilitated a Packaging Stewardship Forum on eco-modulation where representatives across the red meat packaging supply chain heard from experts on the application of eco-modulation from a packaging stewardship perspective, including what eco-modulated fees under proposed by APCO meant for the industry, how eco-modulation has been applied globally, why and how eco-modulation can drive environmentally positive changes in the manufacture, use and recovery of used packaging and the likelihood and timing of such an instrument being implemented in Australia.

MLA representatives met one on one with senior executives from multiple existing product stewardship schemes including Tyres Stewardship Australia, B-Cycle and AgSafe (Drum Muster and

Big Bag Recovery). Two potential collaborative opportunities were identified in improving awareness and management of on farm tyre and battery waste for further consideration in 2026.

Developed and published *A Practical Guide to Managing On Farm Waste* that provides practical actions producers can take to reduce, reuse and properly dispose of waste streams commonly found on farming enterprises by working with product stewardship schemes for tyres, oils, batteries, silage wrap, agricultural and veterinary chemicals and containers, agricultural plastics bags, lighting and solar panels. The guide was developed in close consultation with the relevant product stewardship schemes. It has been published on both the Centre and MLA websites, promoted through the Centre's LinkedIn online forum and Farm Waste e-news. The intent is also for MLA to make available printed copies at producer facing events.

7. Conclusion

The project objectives were delivered and contributed to the delivery of an improved understanding of current packaging challenges, opportunities, regulatory reforms and implications for industry; engagement and awareness raising of producers and processors awareness on how to manage on farm waste such as tyres, batteries, oils, agricultural chemicals and plastics by working with existing product stewardship schemes; as well as fostering new relationships with other stewardship programs and identifying future opportunities to work collaboratively on reducing on-farm wastes and delivering more environmentally positive outcomes for red meat producers and processors.

The Packaging Stewardship Forum and Framework continues to provide a practical way for the red meat packaging supply chain to learn, explore, invest and facilitate actions and incorporate circular principles to avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle and recover problematic waste materials throughout their supply chain. As well as enable and evolve a shared approach to the pathways to increase packaging sustainability.

These outcomes have been underpinned by the Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence's guidance and support in implementing the Red Meat Packaging Stewardship program and in developing a collaborative communications and stakeholder engagement plan incorporating On Farm Product Stewardship.

8. Future research and recommendations

By championing packaging and on farm product stewardship approaches MLA and its members can drive a leadership position that fosters innovation, sustainability and circularity while navigating the changing regulations.

As government packaging stewardship policy and regulations, packaging design and recycling evolve both locally and overseas there is a need to continue to engage with Red Meat Packaging Supply Chain through the Packaging Stewardship Forum on government policy and regulations, and global packaging trends and regulations as well as review and update the Red Meat Packaging Stewardship Framework in response to changing government policies and innovations in packaging design.

With the establishment of new relationships with existing product stewardship schemes there are a number of collaboration opportunities for MLA to explore that will help red meat producers and

processes improve the management of on farm tyre, battery, agricultural plastic and solar panel wastes including producer surveys and on farm collection trials.