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Victoria's biggest PET plastic bottle recycling plant opens for business in Melbourne

15 December 2023

A new \$50 million facility capable of recycling the equivalent of up to one billion 600ml PET plastic beverage bottles a year has commenced operations in Melbourne, coinciding with the start of Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme.

The Circular Plastics Australia (PET) plant will convert used beverage bottles, into high-quality food-grade resin, which is then used to make new recycled PET beverage bottles and food packaging such as meat trays and fruit punnets. The plant will play a key role in recycling PET bottles collected through the Container Deposit Scheme as well as PET plastic packaging from household and office recycling bins.

The world-class facility is the biggest of its kind in Victoria and equipped with state-of-the-art equipment capable of producing 2.5 tonnes of recycled PET resin per hour. Multiple infrared and optical sorters firstly separate out any non-PET material, such as bottle lids, labels, and metals. The PET bottles are then shredded, ground, and washed, before the flaked material goes through a two-stage heating and drying process. The washed flake finally undergoes an extrusion and purification process to produce the recycled PET resin certified to US FDA standards.

When fully operational, the plant will be able to produce around 20,000 tonnes of recycled PET resin each year, equivalent to the weight of two Eiffel Towers.¹ At full production, the facility is expected to employ about 45 people for its 24/7 operations and supported around 60 full time jobs during its construction.

This is the second Circular Plastics Australia (PET) recycling facility now operational in Australia, with the first, a similar sized plant in Albury NSW, commencing operations in March 2022.

Circular Plastics Australia (PET) is a joint venture between Pact Group, Cleanaway Waste Management, Asahi Beverages, and Coca-Cola Europacific Partners (CCEP) and was formed to provide a bottle-to-bottle solution to help accelerate the local plastic circular economy. While competitors in the beverage market, CCEP and Asahi Beverages have come together for this joint venture to help deliver a significant increase in the volume of PET plastics recycled in Australia.

Pact managed the build and now operates the two recycling facilities. Cleanaway provides used PET plastic to be recycled through its collection and sorting network. Asahi Beverages and CCEP use the recycled resin from the joint venture to make new 100% recycled PET beverage bottles while Pact manufactures recycled food and beverage packaging for its customers.

By recycling plastic waste locally, the two Circular Plastics Australia (PET) plants are helping to create a "closed loop" solution for plastic beverage bottles and reduce Australia's reliance on virgin and imported recycled resin.

Pact Managing Director and CEO, Sanjay Dayal, said: "Pact is proud to be part of a sustainable solution where we are making, recycling and remaking plastic beverage bottles in Australia. Together, the two Circular Plastics Australia (PET) recycling facilities are able to process up to two billion plastic bottles a year which helps keep thousands of tonnes of plastic waste out of landfill."

Cleanaway CEO Mark Schubert said: "Cleanaway is proud to be part of building Victoria's circular economy through this bottle-to-bottle recycling facility. Cleanaway's leading integrated network of collections and infrastructure assets provides our customers with high circularity / low carbon solutions and great customer service."

¹ [Eiffel Tower information](#)



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Asahi Beverages CEO Amanda Sellers said: “This plant helps ensure soft drink bottles collected via the Victorian CDS and recycling bins get another life as beverage bottles or food packaging. It’s a big step towards creating a truly circular economy in Victoria. Already, all our 450ml and 600ml water and soft drink bottles are made with 100% recycled plastic (excluding caps and labels).”

Coca-Cola Europacific Partners Australia Managing Director, Orlando Rodriguez, said: “CCEP is determined to be a leader in Australia’s circular economy. Through this investment, alongside the introduction of Victoria’s CDS, we have made great strides in closing the loop on beverage packaging locally. Seven out of 10 of our PET bottles are now made from 100% recycled plastic (excluding caps and labels).”

The CPA (PET) project in Altona North received \$6 million in funding through the Australian Government’s Recycling Modernisation Fund and the Victorian Government’s Circular Economy – Recycling Modernisation Fund.

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About Pact Group.

Pact Group is an Australian-based integrated plastic recycling, reuse and packaging manufacturing company that employs more than 6000 people globally. Pact manufactures plastic packaging for food, beverage, dairy and household products, as well as industrial packaging. Pact currently operates nine plastic recycling facilities in Australia and New Zealand with capacity to process about 100,000 tonnes of plastic a year.

About Cleanaway Waste Management

Cleanaway Waste Management Ltd is Australia’s leading waste management company, with a national network of unique collection, processing, treatment, and landfill assets. Cleanaway operates from more than 350 locations and employs more than 7,600 people. Our philosophy is that all waste is a resource and we aim to incorporate recovery, recycling, and reuse throughout our operations and those of our clients. Our mission is making a sustainable future possible together.

About Asahi Beverages

Asahi Beverages produces many of Australia’s favourite alcohol and non-alcohol beverages – including Cool Ridge water, Schweppes, Victoria Bitter, Carlton Draught. We have a leading multi-beverage portfolio and an ambitious innovation and sustainability agenda. With manufacturing plants in all Australian states, our beverages bring enjoyment and connection to everyday moments in life regardless of the occasion.

About Coca-Cola Europacific Partners

Coca-Cola Europacific Partners is one of the world’s leading consumer goods companies. We make, move and sell some of the world’s most loved brands – serving 600 million consumers and helping 1.75 million customers across 29 countries grow. As one of the largest bottlers and distributors of non-alcoholic and alcoholic ready-to-drink beverages in Australia we have a portfolio that offers a beverage for every occasion.

Media contacts:

Pact Group:

Simon Dowding
Head of Communications & Government Relations
+61 438 480 860
simon.dowding@pactgroup.com

Cleanaway Waste Management:

Mark Biddulph
Head of Corporate Affairs
+61 499 332 601
mark.biddulph@cleanaway.com.au

Asahi Beverages:

Reid Sexton
Group Head of External Communications
+61 413 777 393
reid.sexton@asahi.com.au

Coca-Cola Europacific Partners:

Maddy Berry
Sustainability Communications Manager
+61 484 053 163
mberry@ccep.com