



20 December 2022

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Energy, Environment, and Water
PO Box 6021
Canberra ACT 2600

Correspondence via email: CCEEW@aph.gov.au

Re: Submission to Inquiry into plastic pollution in Australia's oceans and waterways

Expanded Polystyrene Australia is the national peak body for Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) manufacturers. We are committed to sustainability and have a significant economic and employment footprint, worth around \$1 billion to the national economy, directly and indirectly, employing over 4000 people.

We represent over 95 per cent of the EPS sector in Australia, the majority of whom are small to medium-sized, Australian-owned, and operated businesses.

EPS saves considerably more energy than is consumed during its production and is 100% re-cyclable.

Since the 1950s, EPS has been the choice of green building design, packaging boxes to preserve high-value and fragile products, reducing food waste and keeping vital organs and vaccines safe.

Over the last few years, we have been increasingly committed to product stewardship and are poised to launch an innovative consumer focussed approach to recycling with the launch of our own Styrocycle brand, giving mum and dad consumers an opportunity to drop off their EPS for recycling at any of our facilities, local waste management sites and accredited recyclers.

In addition, we have developed an industry Code of Practice for members in the construction sector, attached below, with supply, distribution, and clean-up responsibilities required and we are currently working to further educate builders on best practices.

As Australia no longer has a meaningful manufacturing sector, a large amount of EPS in Australia is imported as packaging for white goods and the inability of consumers to dispose of this in a responsible way causes significant frustration and sees EPS waste spill into our waterways and oceans.

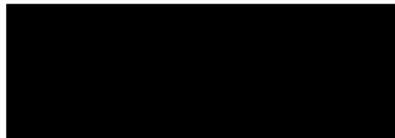
While our Styrocycle initiative will assist in giving consumers an option to see their waste recycled and there are moves to reduce the amount EPS used to package white goods, we call on this committee to require retailers to take responsibility for the waste they generate and further develop initiatives to recycle EPS waste generated by their activities.

Polystyrene can be infinitely recycled, and our closed-loop system benefits natural resources, minimises waste, and lowers CO2 emissions. Despite many suggesting the simple solution to dealing

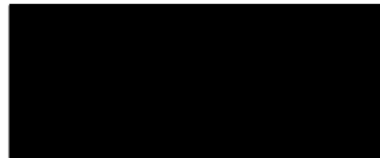


with EPS waste is to ban it, the reality is in many cases this is simply impractical because it the only product fit for purpose.

We as a sector stand ready to work with all levels of government to develop meaningful ways to develop a circular economy for EPS waste in Australia and would invite this committee to join with us in this process and not be misled by uninformed environmental crusaders seeking to mislead on the many benefits our product offers.



Mr Graham Attwood
Technical Advisor
Expanded Polystyrene Australia



Mr Becher Townshend
Executive Director
Expanded Polystyrene Australia



2019/20

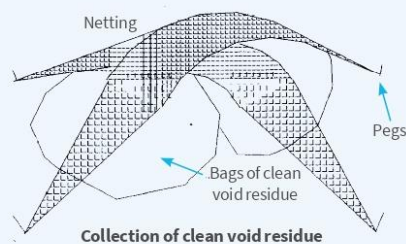
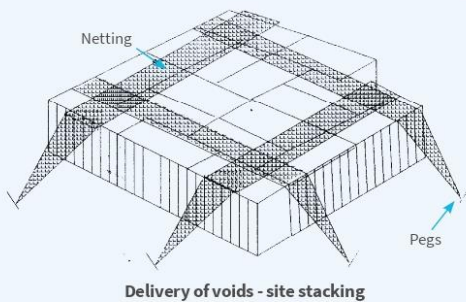
Industry Code of Practice | Airpop pods

AIRPOP POD SUPPLY

A commitment to Distribution and Clean up Responsibilities by EPSA registered Pod moulders

Airpop pod suppliers

- **Conduct reasonable due diligence about product usage and storage** on destination building site to ensure product will be safe and secure.
- **Be aware of the weather** on planned date of delivery, and avoid having drops on days of high wind.
- **Deliver goods and bags for clean up on site and secure product in place** upon delivery by approved tie down method.*
- **Tie down in smaller packs** on windy days to avoid product lift-off.
- **Take photos after delivery to site** to retain as proof that delivery has been made to Airpop Pod code of practice.



Builders/Concreters

- **Manage the use of products on site.** Ensure pods are secure using the approved tie down method at all times;
- **Pack up scrap pods and any off-cuts** and place into bags as provided by the supplier. Secure with approved tie down method.
- **Notify supplier** that unused pods and off-cuts are ready to be collected.
- **Intact pods, along with off-cuts are to be secured** by approved method ready for collection to avoid being blown off site.
- **All recyclable Airpop is to be kept separate** from other materials to avoid contamination.
- **Only clean Airpop waste will be collected from the site.** Bags containing products other than Airpop off-cuts will not be collected. Contaminated Airpop should be placed into the general waste stream as soon as practicable.**
- **Builders are responsible for site compliance with Council requirements on site cleanliness.** Airpop moulders of waffle pods will assist your compliance program through timely scrap pick-up.

Developers

- **Consider the installation of perimeter fencing** to the development site to safeguard the environment.

Airpop scrap collection

- **Take back the clean scrap** from building sites in the return bags supplied within 2 days of notification by builder.
- **Recycle & reuse all clean scrap** that is collected in a manner consistent with EPSA commitments towards achieving a plastics circular economy.
- **Take photos of the scrap bags** and issue a warning to builder if the collected scrap contains contamination.

*Approved method for securing pods will vary from state to state. Approved methods attached.
**Contaminated Airpop refers to Airpop attached to concrete, metal or other products.