

# AUSTRALIAN PACKAGING COVENANT ACTION PLAN

2012 - 2016



AUSTRALIAN HOME OFFICE 17-21 PARRAMATTA ROAD LIDCOMBE NSW 2141

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As a signatory to the Australian Packaging Covenant ("APC"), Costco Wholesale Australia Pty Ltd ("Costco") is committed to achieving the APC objectives of smarter packaging, less waste and a cleaner Australian environment by focusing our efforts on the three performance goals; design, recycling and product stewardship ("APC performance goals").

Costco is a membership based warehouse engaged in wholesale and retail operations. As of December 2011, Costco was the seventh largest retailer, operating a chain of 598 warehouses, employing over 155,000 employees with sales exceeding USD\$87 billion generated by the custom of 64 million loyal members worldwide.

Costco has a growing Australian presence which began in Docklands, Melbourne on 17 August 2009. Currently the Australian presence sits at three warehouses across Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra, with several new stores on the horizon.

To ensure our members are satisfied with every shopping experience, our talented team across corporate office and operations constantly look at refining existing practices and implementing new efficiencies to achieve the objective of providing the best quality product at the best possible value.

Since inception, Costco's core business mission is quality product at the best price possible. Innovation through sustainable packaging has sat strategically within this mission. Costco prides itself on selling larger, bulk pack sizes which in turn decreases the amount of packaging required per measurement unit of product on sale.

Packaging innovation and waste minimisation objectives as set by the APC through its Sustainable Packaging Guidelines ("SPG"), we believe, fit within our existing commercial objectives and we are well placed to fully adopt the SPG and implement this Action Plan for the period 2012 to 2016.

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Patrick Noone Australian Managing Director

31 March 2012

## THE COSTCO COMMITMENT

Costco is committed to achieving the three APC performance goals enshrined in the SPG to ensure that sustainable environmental outcomes result, which are not only of national importance, but are also of positive commercial sense for Costco.

This commitment will build on existing environmental practices employed at Costco and will complement the objectives of the APC.

The success of Costco since establishment in 1983 in the United States has been underpinned by its long term view of conducting business. This global philosophy is at the core of its relatively young Australian operations and environmental sustainability has always been at the forefront of the Costco way of business.

Annually we report on our long established environmental sustainability initiatives performance, including the following:

- Corporate Sustainability and Energy Group ("CSEG"): the mission of the CSEG is
  to develop policy and training and education programs for employees to
  manage sustainable practices within the group. The CSEG also audits for
  constant improvement.
- Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program: in 2007 we ceased using HCFC refrigerant, an ozone depleting substance. Overall operations, we have completed a greenhouse gas emission inventory of operations and we use this to track our emissions and measurably reduce our carbon footprint.
- Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy: our metal building envelopes
  are all insulated to meet or exceed current energy code requirements and
  recycled metal is used for construction of the all buildings.
- Recycling and Waste Stream Management: recycling programs have been implemented at each warehouse to reduce the amount of potentially recyclable rubbish reaching landfill.
- Energy Efficient Products and Innovative Packaging: US based membership of
  the EPA's Energy Star and Climate Protection Partnerships has seen a continued
  effort to encourage our vendors to pursue opportunities to eliminate polyvinyl
  chloride (PVC) in our packaging and replace it with recycled or recyclable
  materials. Packaging design changes for example from plastic containers to re
  sealable pouches have allowed us to increase the amount of product on a pallet,
  resulting in fewer delivery trucks.

• **Commuting:** we encourage employees to carpool to reduce energy consumption. In 1994 the Commute Trip Reduction ("CTR") program has many employee subsidies and incentives for efficient commuting to and from work.

**Current Position:** In this Action Plan, Costco will seek to introduce additional innovative ways to build on the above environmental initiatives. Packaging's role of protecting high quality, wide ranging, often imported product for our valued member's means ensuring that packaging integrity is maintained regardless of the products country of origin or the distance it needs to travel.

Costco undertakes to explore practical ways to revise any inefficient packaging design specifications and communicate any real and feasible changes to offshore package designers to ensure continued improvement with an environmental focus is maintained, whilst maintaining the packages primary role as product protector and promoter.

Our aim is to implement the Action Plan in a strategic and coordinated way through;

- Design Review the SPG applied against our main packaging material types.
  Liaise with suppliers either in collaboration with US head office or separately to
  determine what actions they have taken or are planning to undertake in this
  area.
- Recycling Review current on-site waste management and recovery programs for our warehouses to ensure as much recyclable packaging material is recovered from the waste stream and directed towards recycling as practically possible.
- 3. **Product Stewardship** Consider the inclusion of aspects of the SPG guidelines where we believe our suppliers can assist.

Education and training in collaboration with our Compliance Program, is central to the successful implementation of this Action Plan.



## **COMPANY OVERVIEW**

Costco Wholesale Corporation operates an international chain of membership warehouses, under the "Costco Wholesale" name, that carry quality, brand name merchandise at substantially lower prices than are typically found in conventional wholesale or retail environments. Warehouses cater for personal, business/wholesale needs and are therefore designed to meet both personal shopping as well as small-to-medium-sized business requirements.

Costco Wholesale Corporation began its operations in Seattle, Washington in 1983. In October 1993, Costco merged with The Price Company, which had pioneered the membership warehouse concept in 1976, to form Price/Costco, Inc., a Delaware corporation. In January 1997, non-warehouse assets were spun off to Price Enterprises, Inc., and the company changed its name to Costco Companies, Inc. On 30th August, 1999, the Corporation re-incorporated from Delaware to Washington and subsequently changed its name to Costco Wholesale Corporation, as it is known today and trades on the NASDAQ under the symbol 'COST'. Costco's global corporate office is located in Issaquah, Washington, USA. Costco Australia's corporate office is located in Lidcombe, Sydney, NSW.

Costco's warehouses present one of the largest and most exclusive product category selections to be found under a single roof. Categories include dry groceries, fresh meat, in-store and brought in bakery offers, fresh produce, prepared meals, chilled and frozen foods, confectionary, domestic appliances, televisions, white goods, electronic devices and media, automotive supplies, toys, hardware, sporting goods, jewellery, cameras, books, housewares, apparel, health and beauty aids, tobacco, furniture, office supplies and office equipment. Costco also offers its members additional services through the provision of hearing assessments and aids, optical assessments and prescription eyewear, photo centre and tyre fitting services. Costco is known for carrying top quality national and international brands, at prices consistently below traditional wholesale and retail outlets.

Members can also shop for private label Kirkland Signature and Hathaway products, which are an increasingly important part of its offer. The private label range is designed to be of equal or better quality than the leading national brands and extend across many product categories including beverages, snacks, dry groceries, home wares, manchester, travel goods, appliances, clothing, health and beauty, laundry and service areas such as hearing aid.

According to Jim Sinegal, the Company's former US based President and Chief Executive Officer, "Costco is able to offer lower prices and better value by eliminating virtually all the frills and costs historically associated with conventional wholesalers and retailers, including salespeople, fancy buildings, delivery, billing and accounts receivable. We run a tight operation with extremely low overheads which enables us to pass on dramatic savings to our members."

Costco currently offers two types of membership: Business and Gold Star. Business members qualify by owning or operating a business, while Gold Star membership is available to individuals. Two cards are offered with each membership and you must be 18 years of age or over to be eligible for either membership type.

**Commitment to Sustainability:** As a responsible corporate citizen, Costco is committed to the protection of the environment through waste reduction, energy conservation and the prevention of pollution from its operations.

Costco believes in the continual improvement of our products, associated packaging and operations and adheres to its global philosophy of environmental protection, by:

- Complying with all applicable environmental regulations and other related requirements,
- Conserving and reducing resource consumption, and
- Recycling non-renewable resources where possible.

**Current Recycling Initiatives:** At present, Costco recycles cardboard, paper, plastic film, toner cartridges and tyres, including tyre accessories. These activities whilst yielding some financial benefit, more importantly, reduce landfill.

#### **APC Compliance Officer:**

Managing Director, Patrick Noone has assembled the team responsible for managing the APC end to end – from determining the requirements of the scheme, through to ensuring a suitable framework and appropriate resource allocation to allow for its successful implementation as well as ongoing management and development.

This team convenes on a scheduled basis and formally reports to management on the ongoing success and challenges of this Action Plan.

#### **Covenant Contact Officer:**

Laura Altarac Costco Wholesale Australia Pty Ltd Regional Home Office 17-21 Parramatta Road LIDCOMBE NSW 2141

Phone: (02) 9469 7999 Web: <u>www.costco.com.au</u>

## PACKAGING MATERIALS AND SUPPLY CHAIN

**Position in the packaging supply chain:** Costco as a brand owner is classified as importer, wholesaler and retailer. The range of products sold at Costco includes:

- 'Kirkland Signature' and 'Hathaway' private label, prepackaged product across food and nonfood offers which form the main focus of this Action Plan.
- Well known branded prepackaged products supplied by third party vendors both domestically and internationally,
- Mainly local fresh food products including fruit, vegetable, meat, service deli and food court,
- Core Range includes the main grocery lines including food, beverages, personal care and cleaning products, and
- Seasonal and Event range offers, consist of products that are season specific such as Christmas and Easter or event driven, for example Valentine's Day. In this category, products and services are only available for a limited period of time. This range includes nonfood general merchandise as well as seasonally relevant specialty foods.



**Member purchases:** Costco neither uses nor offers any type of plastic bag at the checkout as packaging for products purchased. It instead encourages the use of cardboard boxes, once used as secondary packaging, to be re-used. Costco believes that this practice extends the useful working life of secondary cardboard boxes before they reach recycling stage.

As an additional service to its members, Costco offers two types of reusable 'envirobags' which customers can choose to purchase. One format is an insulated offer for temperature sensitive products, the other, a non insulated reusable bag for dry, non temperature sensitive commodities.

**Schedule for packaging reviews:** As signatory to the APC, Costco has developed a timetable for reviewing existing in scope products against the SPG's. Costco currently has approximately 1000 in scope SKU's which require review against the SPG's as outlined in the table below. The introduction of any new SKU will be assessed on a case by case basis, to determine whether it will become an in scope product, for the purposes of this Action Plan.

Costco will commence a review of in scope products in a staggered, systematic way, up until 2015. This approach will allow for a considered review to take place in each of the groupings, considering the challenges. The product groupings below were developed in a way to reflect the various packaging formats so that the learning's taken from one product assessment can be applied to similar products. KPI 1 in the Action Plan fully outlines Costco's commitment to the product reviews it will undertake for its Private Label and brand name SKU's.

Costco will finalise a list of in scope products according to each group they fall within, which will also identify the packaging category and commence review as per the assessment schedule listed below. New items will be allocated to the schedule database as they are added to the range.

### Packaging Review Schedule - Groups:

Product Examples	Packaging Type	Primary Packaging Material	Assessment Schedule
Furniture, hardware kitchen appliances, cookware, utensils, shoes, toys, eggs, cereal	Cardboard box	Cardboard	September 2012
Meat, Deli, Seafood, Fresh Produce	Tray	Polystyrene	March 2013
Juices, Soft Drink, Water, pop top drinks, soy sauces	Bottle	PET	September 2013
Yogurts, cheeses, deserts, creams	Tub	PET	September 2013
Milk, dishwashing liquid/powder, liquid soap, shampoo and conditioner	Bottle, Jar	HDPE	September 2013
Long-life milk, juices and cooking stocks	Cardboard bottle	Liquid paperboard	March 2014
Soft Drinks	Can	Aluminium	March 2014
Tomatoes, vegetables, fruits, fish, chicken, long life milks	Can	Steel	March 2014
Chutneys, coffee, vinegar, oil, jam	Jar	Glass	September 2014
Beauty products	Clamshell	Cardboard and PET	March 2015
Confectionary, cereal, sugar,	Bag	Polypropylene Laminate	March 2015

## COSTCO APC ACTION PLAN

From the outset, Costco's objective is to implement the SPG into the Action Plan outlined below. Costco endeavours to work in association with all APC signatories to improve efficiencies, avoid duplication and minimize overall cost. Annual reporting will be incorporated into this Action Plan to report progress and achievements against these key commitments.

APC Performance Goal:	Action Costco will take:	Key Performance Indicators	Covenant KPI Reference	Baseline Data	Targets/Timeframe:
<b>Design:</b> optimize packaging to use		Ongoing SKU list by department developed and analysed for potential packaging redesign. List communicated directly to US head office. The end goal will be to:	KPI 1	No current review data	
resources efficiently and reduce environmental impact without compromising product quality, safety and merchantability.  Review all existing packaging of Kirkland Signature SKU's by department in line with SPG.	1. Avoid or minimize the use of materials and other resources where practically reasonable.	KPI 1	No current review data	Before 1 June 2012 and ongoing till 31 March 2015	
		2. Optimize recyclability and recycled material where possible.	KPI 1	No current review data	

APC Performance Goal:	Action Costco will take:	Key Performance Indicators	Covenant KPI Reference	Baseline Data	Targets/Timeframe:
Design	Identify which non Private Label products will be reviewed against the SPG to ensure that the most sustainable packaging alternatives are considered and communicated to the manufacturer.	Compliance program product review sheet will contain recommendations for improvement in line with the SPG. Costco will assess whether a reasonable workable agreement has been reached with the manufacturer.	KPI 1	No current baseline data to identify such products	Before 1 June 2012 and ongoing for any new product packaging reviewed by compliance department.
Design	Use standardized templates developed specifically for communicating this project.	Easy to follow documents created for recording information for APC Action Plan	KPI 1	No current template	Develop template before 1 June 2012 and revise where necessary
Design	Educate Australian buying team of APC objectives by holding a training seminar. Implement annual reviews for duration of Action Plan.	Australian buyers in full understanding of their obligations with this Action Plan and APC objectives. Confirmation that training was completed. Maintain log of ongoing reviews. Retrain if changes required identified and make sure new employees are aware of Action Plan.	KPI 1	No current APC training or education data	Before 15 June 2012 have developed educational material and conducted training seminars with buyers. Set training date.

APC Performance Goal:	Action Costco will take:	Key Performance Indicators	Covenant KPI Reference	Baseline Data	Targets/Timeframe:
Design	Train new buyers - include material in induction manual and follow up by compliance team to train buyers in compliance induction.	100% training taking place and follow at compliance induction. Sign off sheets maintained and filed.	KPI 1	No current training data	From 15 June 2012 and ongoing for any new buying team member
Design	Prepare training material for Buyers to communicate with domestic vendors of Costco Australia's Action Plan.	Material prepared and vendors have acknowledged receipt of Costco Action Plan. Per SPG ensure vendors are aware that a collaborative effort is expected with any other Australian retailer.	KPI 1	No current training data	Prepared by 1 July 2012 have material for buyers to send to vendors to communicate Costco APC obligations and objectives per this Action Plan.
Design	Maintain an ongoing audit trail for compliance and substantive purposes.	Well documented actions, correctly filed, easily retrievable for audit purposes, chronological and compliant with succession plan protocol.	KPI 1	No current compliance data	Ongoing

APC Performance Goal:	Action Costco will take:	Key Performance Indicators	Covenant KPI Reference	Baseline Data	Targets/Timeframe:
Design	Educate US head office of Costco Australia's obligations under the APC and our objectives. Implement annual reviews for duration of Action Plan.	US head office in full understanding of our obligations and APC objectives. Confirmation that training was completed. Maintain log of ongoing reviews. Retrain if flaws in system and make sure new employees are aware of Action Plan.	KPI 1	No current US training data	Before 1 July 2012 have developed educational material and sent to US for review and internal training. Provide updates on 31 March every year for duration of plan.
Recycling: Efficiently collect and recycle packaging destined for the waste stream.	Review existing on site recovery systems for recycling of used packaging at each warehouse. If deficiencies are identified, implement a system to work with warehouse managers to improve recovery systems.	Consultation with Warehouse managers on Action Plan objectives. Feedback to be obtained on how to best manage and introduce improvements. Improved effort in on-site waste recovery.	KPI 3	Existing on site recovery systems requires modification	By 1 August 2012 have consultations booked. Ongoing reviews each year on 31 March.

APC Performance Goal:	Action Costco will take:	Key Performance Indicators	Covenant KPI Reference	Baseline Data	Targets/Timeframe:
Recycling	Liaise with waste management contractor to monitor tonnes of recycled material removed from sites on an annual basis per warehouse.	Annual audits show increasing tonnage of recycled waste removed from premises.	КРІ З	Existing reports requires modification /review	Annually starting on 1 July 2012 and ongoing.
Recycling	Develop and promote a policy to purchase product with packaging having a recycled material content. Annual audit to check these figures. Have buyers communicate this policy to vendors as part of the vendor pack.	Specific vendor agreement to the policy is identified. Compliance to amend compliance program to include recycling as part of its assessment. Monitor these numbers and report as part of plan.	KPI 4	No current policy data	Prepared by 1 July 2012 have material for buyers to send to vendors to communicate Costco APC obligations and objectives per this Action Plan.

APC Performance Goal:	Action Costco will take:	Key Performance Indicators	Covenant KPI Reference	Baseline Data	Targets/Timeframe:
Recycling	Educate US head office of Costco Australia's obligations under the APC Action Plan and objectives. Implement periodic reviews and provide status updates.	US head office in full understanding of Costco Australia's obligations and APC objectives. Confirmation that training was completed. Maintain log of ongoing reviews. Retrain if flaws in system and make sure new employees are aware of Action Plan.	KPI 4	No current training data	Before 1 July 2012 have developed educational material and sent to US for review and internal training. Provide updates on 31 March every year for duration of plan.
Recycling	Educate Australian Buyers of APC objectives. Implement periodic reviews.	Australian buyers in full understanding of their obligations with this Action Plan and APC objectives. Confirmation that training was completed. Maintain log of ongoing reviews. Retrain if flaws in system and make sure new employees are aware of Action Plan.	KPI 4	No current training data	Before 15 June 2012 have developed educational material and conducted training seminars with buyers. Set training date.

APC Performance Goal:	Action Costco will take:	Key Performance Indicators	Covenant KPI Reference	Baseline Data	Targets/Timeframe:
Recycling	Prepare training material for Buyers to communicate with vendors of Costco Australia's APC Action Plan.	Material prepared and vendor's acknowledgement of receipt received. Per SPG ensure vendors are aware that a collaborative effort is expected with any other Australian retailer.	KPI 4	No current training data	By 15 June 2012 have material for buyers to send to vendors to communicate Costco APC obligations and objectives per this Action Plan.
Recycling	Prepare training material for warehouse staff on recycling.	Periodic training of warehouse staff and new employees includes APC training module.	KPI 4	existing requires modification	By 1 July 2012 and ongoing
Recycling	Maintain an ongoing audit trail for compliance and substantive purposes.	Well documented actions, correctly filed, easily retrievable for audit purposes, chronological and compliant with succession plan protocol.  KPI 4		No current audit data	Ongoing
Product Stewardship: demonstrate commitment of all signatories.	Promote collaboration with other APC parties to improve design and recycling of packaging.	Communicate to buyers, management and vendors where possible improvements could be made. ("Please refer to the Costco Vendor Packaging Recommendation Letter")	KPI 6	No current communication data	1 June 2012 ongoing. Revise letter as required.

APC Performance Goal:	Action Costco will take:	Key Performance Indicators	Covenant KPI Reference	Baseline Data	Targets/Timeframe:
Product Stewardship	Introduce an environmental feedback form to gauge member suggestions of potential packaging improvements.	Satisfactory number of members using feedback forms and Costco acting on suggestions in a practical manner.	KPI 6	Existing customer feedback form requires modification	1 August 2012 ongoing. (needs management approval)
Product Stewardship	Report annually to US head office on Action Plan performance for inclusion in groups annual report.	Inclusion in all future global annual reports under "Greening of Costco" section.	KPI 7	No current Australian data	2012 global annual report and ongoing
Product Stewardship	Maintain an ongoing audit trail for compliance and substantive purposes.	Well documented actions, correctly filed, easily retrievable for audit purposes, chronological and compliant with succession plan protocol.	KPI 7	No current audit data	1 July 2012 and ongoing

APC Performance Goal:	Action Costco will take:	Key Performance Indicators	Covenant KPI Reference	Baseline Data	Targets/Timeframe:
Product Stewardship	Reduce the number of packaging items in the litter stream	Products that are most likely to be consumed away from home like confectionary and small drink bottled products to be subject to labelling review.  Recommendations will be made to vendors of such products to include responsible disposal and recycling instructions and information.	KPI 8	Existing litter reduction efforts requires modification	1 July 2012 and ongoing with annual audits of policy effectiveness.

## **CURRENT COSTCO WAREHOUSES\***

#### **Australian Home Office:**

17-21 Parramatta Rd Lidcombe, NSW 2141 Phone: (02) 9469 7999

#### Office Hours:

Monday - Friday:

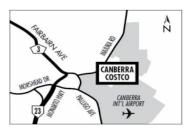
8.00 am - 5.30 pm

#### Mailing address:

P0 Box 207 Regents Park DC NSW 2143

#### Canberra - ACT

39-41 Mustang Ave, Majura Park -Canberra Airport, ACT 2609 Phone: (02) 6246 7500 Email: canberra@costco.com.au

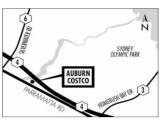


#### **Trading Hours**

Monday to Friday: Saturday: Sunday: 10:00 am - 8:30 pm 9:30 am - 6:30 pm 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

#### Auburn - NSW

17-21 Parramatta Rd Lidcombe, NSW 2141 Phone: (02) 8756 4600 Email: auburn@costco.com.au

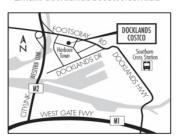


#### Trading Hours

Monday to Friday: Saturday: Sunday: 10:00 am - 8:30 pm 9:30 am - 6:00 pm 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

#### Docklands - VIC

381 Footscray Road Docklands, Victoria 3008 Phone: (03) 8602 0300 Email: docklands@costco.com.au



#### Trading Hours

Monday to Friday: Saturday: Sunday: 10:00 am - 8:30 pm 9:30 am - 6:30 pm 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

## ANNUAL REPORTING

YEAR	REPORT DUE DATE	REPORT NAME
2012	31 March 2012	Inaugural APC Action Plan (2012-2016) to be submitted to APC Council
2013	31 March 2013	2012 Annual Report
2014	31 March 2014	2013 Annual Report
2015	31 March 2015	2014 Annual Report
2016	31 March 2016	2015 Annual Report
2017	31 March 2017	2016 Annual Report