

Product Stewardship Sector Group Meeting Minutes, Wednesday 25 August 2021

Location:	Microsoft Office Teams
Present:	Alexandra Kirkham (Auckland Council), Alec McNeil (Marlborough District Council), Hannah Blumhardt (NZPSC), Rob Wilson (EcoCentralPeter Thompson (Usedfully) Juhi Shareef (thl holdings)
In attendance:	Sarah Pritchett (Facilitator), WasteMINZ, Richard Carroll (AgRecovery) will join the meeting at 12pm
Apologies:	Michael Dudley (TechCollect)

1. Meeting open, apologies and agenda

Sarah Clare (3R) has resigned, mainly due to a difference of opinion with the direction of the programme of work.

The remaining committee who were present at this meeting believe that the direction of the committee is in line with the strategic vision and work plan developed by the committee, which aims to keep the regulated product stewardship aligned with higher level principles and circular ambitions. The committee sees a gap in critical analysis of the current process and believe that if you don't get the policy right you may end up with schemes that are just glorified recycling. Product stewardship needs to be more than on the ground solutions on the ground and aim to reduce the amount of material being produced in the first place.

The other role of the committee is to convey what product stewardship *can* be to a wider audience. The conversation around product stewardship needs to be about how it means shared responsibility and also to start incorporating carbon emissions reduction and how PS can help us achieve this. Ie resource depletion, climate change and downcycling isn't circular and recycling won't stop plastic pollution.

Currently there are lots of requirements for products around safety for eg but nothing about environmental consequence or impact. Environmental benefits need to be emphasised over commercial benefits.

Actions from last meeting

Date raised	Action Point	Status	Allocated to
25/5/21	As per work plan	In progress	
25/5/21	Letter to Minister Parker	Completed	All

2. Agenda items

2.1 May minutes approval or amendments – approved

2.2 Letter to Minister Parker

A letter to Minister Parker on how the process for the design of regulated product stewardship for priority products and need for separate organisation has been finalised and Janine will present it to Minister Parker as part of her meeting with him.

2.3 Small batteries (Alec)

The trials in Christchurch and Marlborough by the councils of free household battery collections have been successful and is an example of councils stepping up and doing something to solve (in this case a health and safety issue) without considering it as stewardship, ie doing something on the ground to solve a problem but without the plan of getting it to become a national scheme or without having a real conversation with retailers or producers to deal with the product and just treating it as waste. Small batteries are one of the biggest headaches for councils and people are told to not put it in bins but there is generally no good alternative for them.

NB: the Lithium Ion Battery working group is developing a plan to plug the gap the meet the current need ahead of the implementation of the e-waste scheme.

2.4 Richard Carroll from AgRecovery

Richard Carroll, Commercial Manager at The Agrecovery Foundation, joined the meeting to provide updates on the farm plastics and agrichemicals and their containers product stewardship schemes. AgRecovery has run a voluntary scheme for agri chemicals since 2006 and was tasked with getting to a regulated scheme when agri chemicals was declared a priority product last year. They were also tasked with leading the co-design of the farm plastics product stewardship scheme, and to work in with Plasback who run a voluntary scheme. The agrichemical scheme was substantially under way when Richard came onboard and a report with proposed scheme was submitted to the Ministry last September. Feedback on this report was only provided by the Ministry in mid-2021 and it now appears to have been pushed down the list of priorities, with tyres and large batteries now taking precedence. The feedback has asked for more detail around costing models and operational costs, and the need for fees not levys.

The farm plastics scheme is a bigger project. Mid last year work was done on trying to quantify farm plastic. While Agrecovery got a fairly high response rate it was initially difficult to get people to voluntarily offer that up, with the data being aggregated to remove commercial sensitivity. There are 3 main waste streams (bale and silage wraps), PP bags and smaller feed and fertiliser bags. The One Stop Shop model was trialed (partly funded by industry and stakeholders and MfE) and the next step is to engage with farmers and stakeholders. The model was tested with Fed Farmers and Hort NZ members surveyed, with reference made back to the MfE guidelines, which spells out that a not for profit needs to run the scheme. A survey was sent recently to stakeholders to test the thinking of the

Product Stewardship Sector Group Meeting Minutes, Wednesday 25 August 2021

scheme design and over 85% were in favour of it. It is proposed to have drop off locations for farmers to take items to, with potentially local processing options. Currently looking at transfer stations as collection points. This would need shipping containers or cages depending on volumes. There is some work now required on trialling this, however lack of funding is the issue. However, longer term the fees will need to cover the collection costs.

Discussion

Alec - Longer term obviously the scheme will be funded by the brands but as an interim measure councils may want to find trails as their funds from the waste disposal levy increases? May be an opportunity for seed funding, for trial period only to prove the concept and then the farmer/brand owners pays in the end.

Sarah – have refillable options been considered? Richard: Not really been considered due to the potential health issues and triple rinsing requirements or potential danger of mixing chemicals. Too much risk involved. Maybe for detergents it is possible.

Hannah – what challenges or opportunities have there been in applying the waste hierarchy to any of the products. Richard: While part of the mantra is only buy what you need, use it all, limit what is going out there etc the scheme is funded by the brands which makes it a delicate position. There are efforts to limit chemicals on farm but Agrecovery is not the one to front that argument. There is over-spraying and work needs to be done on that - currently the drivers are all wrong for those who sell the product (ie incentives to sell more).

Alec – this is an example of the system creating the behaviour so if you change the system you change the behaviour. People still get paid etc but it needs to be structured differently, for example by incentivizing better environmental outcomes not volume sold.

Richard - With regards to farm plastics at Mystery Creek there was a reusable sileage cover but it would be more difficult with bailage. The PP bags are reprocessed and recycled, reuse is more problematic. To be reprocessed they are still getting exported. The smaller feed seed and fertilizer bags are not so standardised as they mostly come from overseas so are more difficult to tackle but having them all made out of the same plastic would help.

Alec - have brands for garden chemicals etc been considered as being collected too?

Richard: They have been identified as being part of the project.

2.5 Items raised by wider sector group

Road Map

In light of the committee's critique of the current system for the design process for priority products it is difficult to create a momentum if the mechanism is not quite right. As the Usefully team are experiencing with textiles there are so many obstacles and barriers to advancing anything that hasn't already been declared a priority product. Minister Parker is already saturated with current priority products so there is no obvious pathway. Meanwhile, for those priority products who have had proposed product stewardship schemes submitted to the Ministry, the process for getting to the next stage (ie regulation) either seems stall or rushed.

Product Stewardship Sector Group Meeting Minutes, Wednesday 25 August 2021

For voluntary product stewardship schemes, which can be initiated by anyone, Vector produced a roadmap which is available [here](#).

Right to Repair

1. How does the committee view New Zealand's involvement and responsibilities in the international Right to Repair Movement?
2. What are the committee's plans to progress the Right to Repair Movement here in Aotearoa, advocating for legislative change as well as strengthening community engagement?

The committee is interested in looking at repair and reduce/reuse layers of waste hierarchy generally and how product stewardship schemes can be designed to achieve this i.e. what tools are available in the toolkit for this? It seems that often the thinking around scheme design that aim for outcomes at the reduce/reuse layers of the hierarchy is underdeveloped so, it would be good to consider what tools could be incorporated into PS schemes (or the new WMA) that would help to amplify repairability and durability, access to repair, as well as product-as-service business models, and to be able to look at opportunities across products, not focus on EEE only (RtR is often tied to digital tech, but the potential of repair, durability and product-as-service go beyond electronics).

Potential actions:

Approaching Minister Faafoi about amendments to the Consumer Guarantees Act that would promote repair over replacement and put the onus onto producers to make their items more repairable (in conjunction with Consumer NZ?)

Investigate how right to repair (more for than just e products) could be enabled through policy in NZ.

3. Other business

4. Next meeting November

Action items from this meeting:

Date raised	Action Point	Status	Deadline	Allocated to
25/08/21	Consumer attitudes towards refillable beverage containers	Sarah has contacted Consumer NZ and Auckland University to see if they have done some research in this area or want to help do some.		Sarah
25/5/21	Comms / education plan (as per work programme) to be developed.	A working group has been initiated with Kahurangi Carter from Para Kore., Lorraine Kamilo from Auckland Council		Alex/Sarah

Product Stewardship Sector Group Meeting Minutes, Wednesday 25 August 2021

Date raised	Action Point	Status	Deadline	Allocated to
		and Des Ng Shiu from the Zero Waste Network and Pacific Vision Aotearoa		
25/08/21	Advocate for right to repair - think pieces, CGA?	ongoing		All

DRAFT