EPSA NEWSLETTER – END YEAR REVIEW 2024

A Message from the President

Simon Pickett

As President of EPSA, I am proud of the strides we've made this year in advocating for sustainable solutions for expanded polystyrene (EPS). Our participation at INC-4 in Ottawa and INC-5 in Busan reinforced the importance of a unified voice to ensure EPS is recognised for its recyclability and pivotal role in the circular economy.

A standout milestone over he past six months has been the launch of the **Waffle Pods The Facts** landing page, a dedicated resource showcasing EPS's contribution to the circular economy of construction. By addressing misconceptions and promoting evidence-based benefits, we're driving greater understanding and adoption of EPS in the building sector.

Simon Pickett

A Message from the Executive Director

Becher Townshend

The past year has been pivotal for EPSA, marked by our active engagement at INC-4 and INC-5. These global negotiations underscored the challenges and opportunities ahead, particularly in ensuring fair policies for EPS manufacturers. It was a privilege to represent EPSA on the global stage, advocating for recycling initiatives like StyroCycle and robust stewardship programs that highlight EPS's contribution to a sustainable future.

This edition of the newsletter captures key milestones, including our commitment to Operation Clean Sweep®, collaboration with APCO, and StyroCycle's future app development. As we look forward, EPSA remains steadfast in protecting the interests of our members while driving meaningful change for our industry. Together, we're shaping a sustainable future for EPS.

Becher Townschend

INC-5 Update: Progress, Challenges, and the Road Ahead for EPS Manufacturers

INC-5, held in Busan, South Korea, marked a pivotal moment in the journey toward a global treaty to address plastic pollution. Concluding in the early hours of December 2, 2024, the session saw over 3,360 participants from 170 countries and more than 440 observer organisations come together to tackle one of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.

A key outcome of INC-5 was the introduction of the **Chair's Text**, a draft framework that will guide negotiations at the resumed session in 2025. This document outlines key elements under discussion and presents options for building consensus, marking progress in critical areas:

- **Binding Measures on Product Design:** The text introduces mandatory standards to improve recyclability and promote circular economy practices.
- **Global List of Chemicals and Products of Concern:** A significant step toward phasing out harmful substances, though this remains listed as an option alongside weaker alternatives.
- **Financial Mechanisms:** While still unresolved, discussions highlighted the need for financial support to enable a global transition.

What This Means for EPS Manufacturers

For the EPS industry, the treaty negotiations present both challenges and opportunities. The focus on product design and harmful chemicals highlights the growing need for sustainable materials like expanded polystyrene (EPS). When managed correctly, EPS is not only highly recyclable but also a leader in circular economy practices, with initiatives like StyroCycle demonstrating how effective recycling solutions can reduce waste and drive sustainability.

EPS manufacturers have a unique opportunity to lead the way by advancing product stewardship programs that increase recycling rates and support customers in managing EPS at end-of-life. Through valuable services such as take-back initiatives and recycling partnerships, manufacturers can ensure EPS is responsibly collected, processed, and given a second life—keeping it out of landfills and contributing to a circular economy.

Pictured: The delegates from the Global EPS Sustainability Alliance

EPSA's Commitment to Operation Clean Sweep

EPSA is proud to announce its commitment to Operation Clean Sweep® (OCS), a global initiative aimed at preventing the loss of plastic resin pellets, flakes, and powders into the environment.

By implementing best practices, OCS ensures that these materials stay within the supply chain, reducing their potential to contribute to marine debris and pollution.

At EPSA, sustainability is a core focus, and this commitment aligns with our mission to promote responsible practices within the EPS industry. OCS's proactive measures, such as proper handling, storage, and cleanup processes, are integral to minimising environmental impact and preserving our ecosystems.

We urge our members, partners, EPS manufacturers, and raw material suppliers to adopt Operation Clean Sweep® standards and lead the way in sustainability. By joining this global initiative, you can prevent plastic pellet loss, protect the environment, and showcase your commitment to responsible manufacturing and a cleaner future.

Learn More

Visit Operation Clean Sweep to explore how you can contribute to keeping our waterways and communities free of plastic pollution.

Styrocycle Network Expansion

StyroCycle continues to go from strength to strength, playing a vital role in promoting EPS recycling across Australia. In addition to participating in community events like the **Zero Waste Festival**, StyroCycle has collaborated with **Maroondah and Knox City Councils on Detox Your Home Days**, making it easier for households to responsibly recycle EPS packaging.

Looking ahead, we're excited to announce the development of a dedicated **StyroCycle EPS Reporting App**, set to launch in 2025. See more on this below!

EPSA remains committed to sustainability through initiatives like StyroCycle, empowering communities and industries to make a lasting environmental impact.

NEW StyroCycle Reporting App in 2025

We're excited to announce plans for a **StyroCycle Recycling Reporting App**, set to launch in 2025. This tool will help EPS recyclers track and report efforts, ensuring transparency and measurable environmental impact.

The plan is to enable users log key data, such as bins collected, tonnes of EPS diverted from landfill, contamination levels, and carbon emissions saved, while receiving weekly and monthly insights to highlight their contributions to a circular economy.

This initiative reinforces StyroCycle's commitment to sustainable practices and Australia's recycling infrastructure, promoting accountability, participation, and innovation in EPS recycling.

Product Stewardship Update

Expanded Polystyrene Australia (EPSA) continues to work with the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation to develop product stewardship for EPS packaging in Australia.

The move has come about as the Federal Government moves towards product stewardship for packaging of consumer goods, with focus on encouraging either recycling or replacement of unnecessary items.

In its submission to APCO, EPSA has committed to work closely with APCO to develop product stewardship for EPS in Australia.

EPSA Executive Director, Becher Townshend said applauded APCO for showing leadership in the area of business to consumer packaging but warned such a move should not become a backdoor tax on local moulders.

“We welcome APCO’s move to develop a scheme that allows retailers, brand owners and importers to be responsible for the EPS waste they generate, but are concerned if such a program was extended to become a levy on locally produced business to business EPS packaging, which is already appropriately managed.

“EPSA has for many years worked to support ESP recycling of locally of manufactured business to business products and while we welcome others realising they need to take responsibility for the waste they generate, we do not want our members unfairly impacted,” Mr Townshend said.

Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) in the News

The Complexities & Dangers of Plastic Bans

Scientists from Heriot-Watt University warn that banning plastics could harm the environment more than it helps. Alternatives like metal and glass would double global energy consumption and triple greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, they advocate for a circular economy approach, emphasising better recycling and reuse.

Led by Professor David Bucknall, the group highlights plastics’ essential roles, such as lightweight packaging reducing transport emissions and critical use in healthcare. They stress the importance of evidence-based policies and industry collaboration to address plastic pollution without unintended consequences.

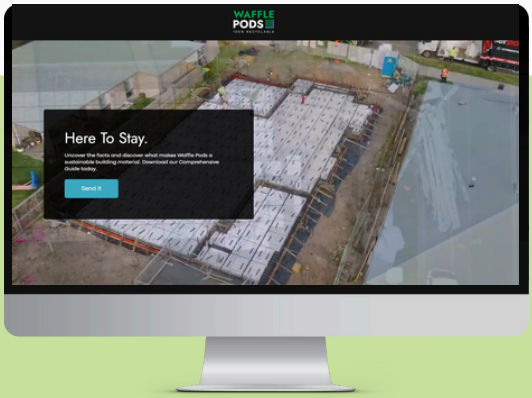
Read about it here:

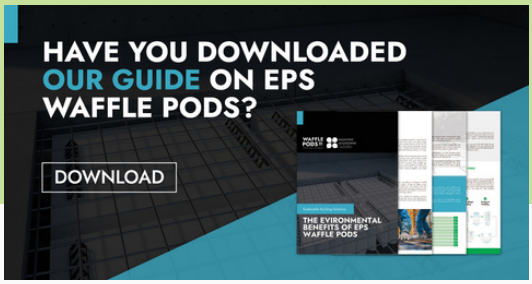
https://tekpaksolutions.com/plastic-ban-could-do-more-harm-than-good-to-environment/

Discover the Facts: EPS Waffle Pods Lead the Way in Sustainable Construction

In July this year, we announced the launch of **Waffle Pods The Facts**, a resource hub to counter misconceptions and showcase the benefits of EPS Waffle Pods.

Now live, the platform has already seen excellent engagement, with many downloading the guide **"Sustainable Building Solutions: The Environmental Benefits of EPS Waffle Pods."**





For over 50 years, EPS Waffle Pods have been vital to efficient slab foundation construction. They are lightweight, durable, cost-effective, and provide up to an R1.0 thermal rating, helping meet energy efficiency standards. They not only contain recycled content, but are also 100% recyclable.

The platform tackles myths about sustainability and recyclability while highlighting EPS Waffle Pods' practical benefits, like reduced concrete use and streamlined installation.

Take the Next Step

Visit Waffle Pods The Facts and download the guide to see how EPS Waffle Pods can transform your construction projects sustainably!

VISIT

Thank you for staying engaged with our efforts and advancements. Together, we can continue to promote the sustainable and beneficial use of Expanded Polystyrene in all its applications.

STYROCYCLE
POLYSTYRENE RECYCLING

expanded polystyrene australia