

2023 HEALTH, BEAUTY & WELLNESS PACKAGING DESIGN OF THE YEAR **GOLD WINNER** 

# **Coles Group**

KOi Foaming Refillable Handwash Starter Kit & Refill Tablets



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## **Key Outcomes and Measurement**

- Includes concentrated hand wash tablets
- Just add water
- Reduces the use of single-use plastic bottles
- 'Australian made' logo & Australasian Recycling Label (ARL) on back
- 30% rHDPE
- 47% reduction in pallet weight •
- 38% more cartons per pallet
- 'Reduce, reuse & recycle' label on front
- 85% lighter than a traditional single-use handwash bottle



Pact Group & Dulux Group **Company: Country:** Australia

As part of their ambition to create a more sustainable future, Coles know that their customers are continuously looking for ways to reduce their use of packaging. Coles have developed their R3 Packaging Framework which is based on the three pillars of redesign, recycle and reimagine. These principles guide packaging design for and align with Coles ambition to create a more sustainable future.

Coles is a signatory to the Australian Packaging Covenant and a Member of the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO), tasked with delivering Australia's 2025 National Packaging Targets (2025 Targets). They are also a founding Member of the Australian New Zealand and Pacific Islands Plastics Pact (ANZPAC Plastics Pact).

While there are many external factors that influence the achievement of the 2025 Targets and the ANZPAC Plastics Pact, such as infrastructure and market innovation to supply quality recycled raw material, Coles is committed to working with industry and government to support their delivery.



- Coles saw an opportunity to develop a reusable handwash format that allows customers to repurchase dissolvable concentrated tablets, instead of a single use bottle
- The refillable tablet packaging is smaller in size and approximately 85% lighter in weight than a traditional single use handwash bottle.
- ✓ The inclusion of 30% recycled HDPE in the reusable bottle sees the reduction of virgin materials.
- ✓ The updated ARL provides guidance on what packaging components can be disposed of according to different waste streams.
- Re-designing this packaging format was a collaborative effort between Coles, their product supplier and the packaging manufacturer.

## In the context of your packaging innovation, what do you see as Sustainable Packaging?

**Re-design** – is focused on reducing unnecessary packaging and removing all non-recyclable components. Coles reusable handwash design includes a reusable bottle and lid. The non-reusable packaging items (the cardboard tag and the plastic wrapper for the tablets) were designed for optimal material efficiency.

**Recycle** – is focused on ensuring packaging gets recycled as much as possible. The company's role to play here is to apply the Australasian Recycling Label on all Own Brand packaging. The Handwash Starter Kit Bottle clearly outlines to customers the sustainability benefits.

This includes:

- A 'reduce, reuse and recycle' label on front of pack.
- The 'Australian made' logo on back of pack.
- The Australasian Recycling Label (ARL) on back of pack to help customers recycle the cardboard tag correctly.
- Clear messaging that 'by choosing this reusable KOi bottle and refilling KOi foaming handwash tablets, you are helping to minimise single use packaging and reduce waste.

**Reimagine** – is focused on finding new ways to reuse non-recyclable materials. The reusable handwash bottle includes 30% recycled HDPE material, reducing Coles reliance on virgin materials.

### What would you say were the decision-making drivers (Internal and External) influencing your packaging design?

We know that our customers are continuously looking for ways to reduce their use of packaging.

To address this, we developed the KOi Refillable Foaming Handwash Starter Kit and the KOi 4 Pack Refillable Handwash Tablets.

#### **Design to Reuse**

The KOi Invigorating Foaming Hand Wash Tablets incorporate a naturally derived formula in an exclusive tablet format for the KOi brand. The entirely new concept for the KOi brand is the first step towards a reuse model within the Coles Own Brand Health & Beauty Category.

#### **Design for Recovery**

A key focus in designing the Handwash Starter Kit was to continue the recyclability of KOi bottles. Traditionally within the KOi brand Coles started off with opaque PET bottles, however over time they transitioned to recyclable HDPE bottles and continued that journey with the Refillable Handwash Starter Kit bottle. Even though this new range is a Reuse and Refill model, it was still important to select a recyclable material and keep consistency across the KOi brand and their sustainability goals. Coles is committed to supporting industry to achieve an average of 50% postconsumer recycled content across plastic packaging. The bottle they designed contains 30% recycled content sourced and produced locally within Australia.

The cardboard unit carton that contains the tablet, and the cardboard swing tag used on the bottle are made from paper and are kerbside recyclable.

#### Design to Minimise Litter

Coles wanted to keep packaging components to a minimum and only use packaging items that were necessary to make up the starter kit. The Australian Recycling Logo is also clearly displayed on-pack so customers know how to correctly dispose of each packaging item.

#### Design for Transport Efficiency

Using the tablet concept has allowed for a lighter and smaller shelf friendly packaging load to be used compared to a standard 500mL bottle. They also designed the starter kit so that the tablets were placed inside the bottle, to limit packaging and maximise transport efficiencies.



# What benefits does this new design offer your business and your consumers? Why is the pack more sustainable?

The use of the refill format in replacement of a single use format provides a wide range of sustainability benefits, including:

#### Reduction of single use plastic:

- The customer must only purchase one refillable bottle and then top up their handwash with the individual tablets. This reduces the use of single use plastic bottles.
- Additionally, the PP wrap and cardboard box used for the refillable tablets is approximately 85% lighter than a traditional single use handwash bottle. To provide further packaging reductions, the tablets in the Refillable Handwash Starter Kit are unwrapped inside the bottle.

**Reduction of virgin plastic:** At Coles, they are always looking for ways to increase their use of recycled materials across their entire Own Brand product range. The refillable bottle has been designed with 30% recycled HDPE, reducing the use of virgin materials in manufacturing. This is above APCO industry target of 20% for HDPE plastics.

**Optimised transport efficiencies:** The refillable tablet packaging is smaller in size and approximately 85% lighter in weight than a traditional single use handwash bottle. This has reduced the overall pallet weight by 47% and increased the quantity of cartons per pallet by 38%.\*

\*Based on KOi 500mL handwash bottle. A current 500mL handwash bottle packed onto a pallet equates to approximately 930kg and 315 cartons per pallet. Moving to a tablet format equates to approximately 438kg and 832 cartons per pallet.

# What volumes of materials, packaging and waste have you saved by designing this new packaging?

Did you do this through changing materials, lightweighting, recycled content, making the packs recyclable or reusable?

The refill format significantly reduces packaging required in the customers home and during transport. If all purchases of the KOi Handwash liquid bottle transitioned to the Refillable Handwash bottle, Coles would save 250,000 bottles or 14 tonnes of single use plastic each year.

The refill tablets are wrapped in a light-weight PP wrap. During development, Coles explored several alternative paper options. The light-weight PP wrap was chosen as it passed all stability testing and helps to maintain the product quality and integrity. A PP wrap was used as it reduced the amount of water vapor that could pass through the wrap, which the paper ones failed on, resulting in the tablets becoming soft and starting to swell. To provide further packaging reductions, the tablets in the Refillable Handwash Starter Kit are unwrapped inside the bottle.

The tablets are packed into a light-weight unit carton for optimal space and weight efficiency. The unit carton is kerbside recyclable and recyclable in Coles back of house recycling system.

## How much on-pack and off-pack information do you provide your customers?

The Handwash Starter Kit Bottle clearly outlines to customers the sustainability benefits. This includes:

- A 'reduce, reuse and recycle' label on front of pack.
- The 'Australian made' logo on back of pack.
- The Australasian Recycling Label (ARL) on back of pack to help customers recycle the cardboard tag correctly.
- Clear messaging that 'by choosing this reusable KOi bottle and refilling KOi foaming handwash tablets, you are helping to minimise single use packaging and reduce waste.

The Handwash Tablets have clear instructions on how to correctly use the product to prevent product wastage and optimise the tablets.



### What do you feel will be needed to further improve packaging design in the future? (e.g. education, investment, policy/legislation, tech, etc?)

Based on Coles work to date and engagement with suppliers, below are opportunities for further collaboration across the packaging value chain: Availability of detailed packaging specifications; Recording of packaging data to enable accurate reporting; Changes to what is classified as recyclable in Australia; Solutions for packaging that is not currently recyclable, however fit for purpose to meet shelf life and customer expectations.



## What does your company have planned in the future? Any new innovations on the horizon?

Aligned to the 2025 National Packaging Targets, we are supporting industry to achieve:

- 100% recyclable, reusable or compostable.
- Include an average of 50% recycled content APCO has set industry targets for recycled content by material type. The 50% target is an average across all packaging in Australia, so we need to include as much recycled content where possible; for example, across rigid PET plastics and cardboard.
- Carry the Australasian Recycling Label (ARL).
- Phase out problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic.

While there are many external factors that influence the achievement of the 2025 National Packaging Targets and the ANZPAC Regional Plastics Targets, such as infrastructure and market innovation to supply quality recycled raw material, Coles is committed to working with industry and government to support their delivery.



## As a winner of the PIDA awards, how valuable is the award to your organisation?

Natalie Shaw, Sustainable Packaging Governance and Implementation Lead, Coles Group says, "Winning a PIDA award is a significant achievement for the Coles Own Brand Team. It reinforces that working in packaging is a dynamic space that celebrates innovation and sustainable design. Our team is committed to improving sustainability across our product packaging that, in turn, enables customers to divert packaging waste, including plastic, from landfill. Winning a PIDA award is a high recognition and provides motivation to keep improving and innovating as we work towards meeting the 2025 targets."



#### You have been awarded a WorldStar Packaging Award. What does this mean to your business?



"Winning a WorldStar Packaging Award is a significant achievement for the Coles Own Brand Team and we are proud to represent Australia and New Zealand in this prestigious awards program. It reinforces that working in packaging is a dynamic space that celebrates innovation and sustainable design. Our team is committed to improve sustainability across our product packaging that, in turn, enables customers to divert packaging waste, including plastic, from landfill. Winning a WorldStar Packaging Award is a high recognition and provides motivation to keep improving and innovating as we work towards supporting industry in delivering the 2025 National Packaging Targets," said Natalie Shaw, Sustainable Packaging Governance and Implementation Lead, Coles Group.



The Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Awards are an Australia and New Zealand program that is coordinated by the Australian Institute of Packaging (AIP). The awards recognise companies and individuals who are making a significant difference in their field across Australia and New Zealand. The PIDA Awards are the exclusive entry point for Australia and New Zealand for the prestigious WorldStar Packaging Awards.

The Design Innovation of the Year company awards recognise organisations that have designed innovative packaging within each of these six manufacturing categories:

- Food
- Beverage
- Health, Beauty & Wellness

There are four special awards available:

- Sustainable Packaging Design
- Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design

Domestic & Household
Labelling & Decoration

Outside of the Box

Save Food Packaging Design
Marketing Award

The **Sustainable Packaging Design Special Award** is designed to recognise companies that have developed innovative packaging solutions that incorporate sustainability considerations. All entries are judged on Sustainable Packaging Design considerations such as social impact, material, source reduction, energy and recovery and what packaging changes the company is undertaking to meet the 2025 National Packaging Targets. This is also a WorldStar Packaging Awards category.

The Australian Institute of Packaging (AIP) is the peak professional body for packaging education and training in Australasia. The AIP helps shape the careers of generations of packaging professionals – from packaging technologists to international packaging business leaders along with a host of people in associated disciplines – sales and marketing, purchasing, production and environment.

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