



**2019 SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING DESIGN  
SPECIAL AWARD - MATERIALS  
HIGH COMMENDATION**



## Woolworths

Renewable pulp/fibre bakery tray

### Key Outcomes and Measurement

**265** Tonnes  
Reduction of overall  
plastic reduced by the  
new tray



Recyclable via  
Australasian Recycling Logo (ARL)



AS5810 Home  
Compostable



**418 tonnes**  
of carbon emissions offset  
in transitioning to the  
renewable tray

**75%** Percentage of products previously packed entirely  
in plastic are now packed in the renewable trays



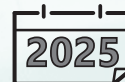
Renewable materials are used in the tray including 60%  
sugarcane byproduct and 40% unbleached bamboo



Project supplier partnership  
saw 50 seedlings planted in  
the Daintree Rainforest



Replaced non-recyclable  
black trays on over 50  
bakery products



Committed to 2025  
National Packaging Targets



**Company:** Woolworths Australian Retailer

**Product:** Replacing black plastic non-recyclable plastic trays with a  
renewable sourced pulp/plant-based fibre sourced from  
unbleached bamboo (40%) and unbleached sugarcane (60%)

**Country:** Australia

Woolworths, Australia's largest grocery retailer, understand the growing concerns from many customers regarding plastic in stores. Woolworths took action in reducing plastic with this winning entry – the renewable pulp and fibre bakery tray. Woolworths worked with a number of like-minded suppliers who were looking to progress in the same direction to develop the tray. The award winning tray replaces a previous polymer-based black tray using non-renewable resources with the new plant-based tray, made from a combination of renewable materials – unbleached bamboo and unbleached sugarcane.

Woolworths have eliminated some 265 tonnes of black plastic with the pulp/fibre trays, closing the loop through design, technology and partnerships.



- Woolworths saw an opportunity to reduce virgin plastic consumption, but also to improve recyclability.
- Pulp/fibre replacements for black plastic can contribute to improved product quality.
- Connecting with customers through the ARL, websites and in-store helps promote the sustainable change.
- The design was the result of a truly collaborative approach.
- Investment in technology, packaging recovery, and education are key for the future.

## What is sustainable packaging to you?

Woolworths Packaging Specialist, Nathan Ingleby MAIP says *“the key term to consider for sustainable packaging is use as little packaging as possible but as much as necessary. The paramount thing that can never be overlooked is the impact on food waste and/or food quality. So when packaging changes are being designed, there is a marriage between the two which is where the design needs to build from.”*

Nathan also says sustainable packaging needs to consider the lifecycle of both the product and the package. *“If we have to dispose of product before its consumed, whether it be a cucumber or a steak, the net effect on the environment of wasting the product is far greater than the packaging that delivers it,”* explained Nathan.

Nathan also sees the pulp/fibre replacement for the black bakery trays as improving recyclability – another key element of sustainable packaging. *“We have also found that the choice to go to a pulp/fibre replacement in this case, has enabled them to be either curbside recycled through the paper stream or composted at home or via compost collection services.”* Nathan explained.

## What is the story behind the design?

Nathan started exploring replacement trays for the bakery in around 2016.

*“We knew that the black plastic trays couldn’t be identified in some of the MRFs and if they could be, they could only ever go back to black plastic – it doesn’t help the circular economy that much.”*

The search for sustainable replacements was fuelled by both in-house realisations of the amount of plastic used in the bakery – at the senior level and by the bakery staff themselves.

*“But we also knew that customers are after plastic free, or more sustainable solutions in their shop,”* said Nathan.

Nathan explained, *“By replacing the black plastic, it opened the door to address other plastic items, creating an opportunity to correct a range of packaging from an environmental point of view. In some cases it also improves product quality.”*





## Connecting with customers

Being able to reduce plastic consumption, while also educating their customers has been a key design element. *"We've actually embossed end of life avenues into the tray itself using the ARL. It's a small thing that we can do to both connect and educate customers,"* explained Nathan.

Woolworths also publically publishes its sustainability report on-line and uses in-store promotion to update its customer base on packaging improvements. They also align the annual sustainability showcase with World Environment Day.

## It takes a team

The design was the result of a cross-team collaboration at Woolworths. *"There was the food co packaging, a branding team, a quality team, and a procurement team. The project was led by the food co and procurement teams, but it was the commercial bakery team who were most critical – they allowed us to change their whole category – a first for Woolworths,"* Nathan explained.

Nathan says the Food Co team also benefit from the younger generation coming through. *"I'm inspired by some of the ways they look at things. It is a team effort."*

## What about the future?

For Nathan, to achieve continued improvements in packaging in the future, three key investments are necessary: 1. Technology 2. Packaging Recovery 3. Education of consumers and the wider industry.

*"Personally, I see companies making great strides towards the 2025 National Packaging Targets. Companies can lead the way, but if necessary, we may need to consider policy."*





## What does winning an Australasian Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Award mean?

Woolworths Packaging Specialist, Nathan Ingleby MAIP says *"As a company, this is our first packaging award – our CEO has commended the team and the award is taking pride of place in our Heritage Room."*

*"Internally, what it's done is elevated the importance of not only our ways of working, but our ability to effect change."*

*"The team has gained exposure for its ability to deliver success."*



## Woolworths Receives Global Recognition with WorldStar Packaging Award



**WORLDSTAR  
SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING  
SPECIAL AWARD  
SILVER WINNER 2021**

Following the win at the PIDA Awards Woolworths went on to win the prestigious WorldStar Sustainable Packaging Silver Special Award and also a General WorldStar Packaging Award.



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
- Domestic & Household
- Labelling & Decoration
- Outside of the Box

There are four special awards available:

- Sustainable Packaging Design
- Accessible & Inclusive Packaging Design
- 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.

### Australian Institute of Packaging

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