



# LITTLE CHANGES WITH BIG IMPACT

The Little Big Dairy Co is a family dairy business based on the banks of the Macquarie River outside of Dubbo, NSW. Founded in 2012 and controlling the product from start to finish – milking, processing and into the bottle – Little Big works on the ethos of taking care of all the small things, knowing these build into something big.

APCO reached out to Little Big to find out more about their sustainable packaging journey including support they've received from APCO's resources and programs, as well as from AusIndustry and the Australian Institute of Packaging (AIP) in a Sustainable Packaging Project.

## How important is sustainable packaging to your business?

Sustainable packaging is important to our business for a few different reasons. We want our packaging to be as sustainable as possible. As part of our commitment to circularity, packaging has been identified as an area for improvement, and a way to communicate our ambitions. That means using resources in a considered way, reducing inputs where possible, and having our products packaged in 100% recyclable packaging.

Packaging is also the first thing consumers see and feel when deciding to pick our product up off the shelf. Having packaging that is more sustainable, enables consumers to quickly understand the ethics behind the company and product they're purchasing.

We also understand the need to build value in post-consumer packaging. By ensuring our packaging is 100% recyclable, and producing a higher value recycled input, we are signifying to the market that there is value in more sustainable packaging options.

## Are you working towards the 2025 National Packaging Targets?

Little Big is working toward the 2025 National Packaging Targets, and we're proud of the packaging interventions we have made up to this point. We were the first dairy brand in Australia to use clear bottle caps in place of dark pigment colours, to help improve the recoverability of the material. We have also introduced our milk in 10L bladders, removing more than 260,000 single-use bottles from market a year. Investment in packaging equipment has allowed us to secure our boxes with hot glue, removing tape from our packaging.

While we're only little, we strive to make big bold moves and are always testing what we do to make sure we're leading the industry and meeting both our internal sustainability goals and the expectations of our consumers.

## Did your business refer to any APCO resources when making the decision to change the colour of your bottle caps?

Through the information that the [Sustainable Packaging Guidelines](#) (SPGs) provided it was obvious that we weren't as sustainable as we wanted to be. It became clear that the lids were the next step towards having sustainable packaging. The SPGs have provided checklists and information about how our business can effectively translate to sustainable safe packaging. With little and simple steps it makes it easy to understand and achievable.

Industry specific resources, like the [Australian Dairy Sustainable Packaging Roadmap to 2025](#), available through APCO were encouraging. Little Big got a thrill from being the first Australian Dairy to implement the strategy of reducing pigment in bottle caps, recommended in the roadmap, before any of the companies who were involved in developing the roadmap.



### Were there any barriers to implementing the colour change?

Yes, there were barriers when implementing the colour change, through customer purchasing behaviour. Research into consumer purchasing behaviour told us that a majority of customers identify the type of milk they buy from the colour of the lid. So the risk to our business if we didn't manage and communicate this change effectively was huge.

To overcome this we embraced one of our core values, we over communicate, and spoke to our customers about what we were doing at all stages of the change process. Social media also allowed us to explain our change to an engaged audience, who as advocates for the brand were able to help spread the why behind the change.

### What were the benefits of participating in the Sustainable Packaging Project?

Little Big benefited greatly from our involvement in the Sustainable Packaging Project and the guidance provided by AusIndustry and the AIP. It introduced us to valuable resources, connected us with like-minded businesses, challenged us to do more and to think about packaging in a new way, it introduced us to APCO and encouraged us to be part of a wider network of packaging and sustainability professionals.

The AIP introduced us to the more formal aspects of sustainable packaging and the resources available to businesses in this space. It was representatives from AIP who, through their "one-to-one hour of power", challenged Little Big to swap to clear caps, and really energised us to do more.

### Has participating in the Sustainable Packaging Project changed the way you do business or helped you improve relationships with suppliers and clients?

It has helped us improve our business in the way we see our products and how they are packaged. It has positively impacted our interest in our packaging and how that doesn't just impact us.

Involvement in the project helped us to innovate and lead in new ways. It positively impacted our interest in packaging and the role it plays in our circularity commitments.

By showing that we care about how important packaging is, and that we care about the little things, this shows our clients that we do care about them and the products we give them. Working with suppliers in making our packaging the most sustainable product on the market is also important to us. These relationships matter to Little Big and a little way we show that is how we look after our packaging.

The project, and the outcomes it has precipitated has positively impacted our relationship with our customers. Relationship building with major supermarkets has benefited from the outcomes of the project and has helped us gain exposure in the marketplace. It has also helped us to educate consumers about their purchasing habits - people are often so intrigued that something as little as a milk cap can have such an impact on the downstream sustainability of post-consumer packaging.

#### More information

- **The Little Big Dairy Co:** <https://www.littlebigdairy.com/>
- **Australian Institute of Packaging:** <http://aipack.com.au/>
- **AusIndustry:** <https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/ausindustry>
- **APCO:** [www.apco.org.au](http://www.apco.org.au)