

First step for soft plastics

BY ELLEN EBSARY

SOFT plastics are being collected at Albury's waste management centre for the first time, but recycling household soft plastics is still on the horizon.

Albury Council has received a \$25,000 Circulate grant from the NSW EPA to run a trial with local businesses until June 30.

Resource recovery team leader Andrea Baldwin identified businesses, through an expression of interest, whose waste will go to North Albury business Plastic Forests.

"We've been able to get close to 20 businesses who have a collection point ... and we've engaged a waste contractor to go there on a regular basis and collect all the soft plastic," she said.

"We're taking it straight to Plastic Forests, who are then turning it into other products.

"We hope to collect 26 tonnes of soft plastic.

"We've already done about six tonne of that over the Christmas period."

Ms Baldwin hopes the trial, recycling a heavier



NEW LIFE: Albury Council's resource recovery team leader Andrea Baldwin is co-ordinating a trial where soft plastics from 20 businesses are being collected and sent to North Albury business Plastic Forests for recycling.

soft plastic than household waste, will inform a model to be replicated for other councils and businesses.

"For your mums and dads, household plastic still needs to go back to Woolies and Coles through that RedCycle

program," she said. "We haven't had much of a focus on soft plastic; it is a hard plastic to manage.

"These are great initiatives to trial, but we really do need to encourage people to buy that recycled product."

Plastic Forests managing director David Hodge agreed individuals, businesses and governments needed to increase their use of recycled products at the end of the line.

"Recycling only happens

when someone buys a product with recycled content," he said.

"Putting things in yellow bins is the start of the journey, not the end of the journey.

"Unfortunately, there's



David Hodge

lack of support from federal, state and local government in the circular space."

Mr Hodge said both state and federal governments were increasing their support and initiatives like the Circulate trial all helped.

"We tend to be doing well in the infrastructure space, providing underground electrical cable covers for solar farms ... and fence posts for farmers and the equine sector," he said.

"If you're a council engineer ... or if you're looking for some garden edging for your own home, buy recycled.

"It's going to last five times longer anyway."