



AUSTRALIAN PACKAGING  
*REVISED COVENANT ACTION*  
*PLAN*

2016 to 2017

Searles, growing with you...

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

JC & AT Searle Pty Ltd (Searles) is a leading supplier of home garden, gift and homewares products, producing potting mixtures, composts and soil conditioners, mulches, organic fertilisers, lawn care and general garden related products for the home garden market.

Searles is renowned for our ability to provide excellence in products whilst being at the forefront of environmental preservation and dedication. Our facility at Kilcoy sets a leading example of a fully master planned production facility that incorporates complete water retention, integrated recycling of internal wastes and sourcing of selected recycled organic products to produce leading quality garden products.

Packaging used by Searles is predominantly flexible polyethylene plastic bags, rigid plastic bottles and recycled cardboard shipping cartons.

Searles strong commitment to the environment is obvious from our relentless pursuit of packaging and freight reduction, efficient collation of goods and freight minimisation.

Searles recognises that as a recognised brand owner, we are committed to the goals and principles of the Australian Packaging Covenant and undertake to continue with our teamwork, strategies and policies for our continued strong dedication to the environment as a whole.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 COMPANY PROFILE**

Searles is a result of humble beginnings. In 1977, Con & Jenny Searle started Sunshine Coast Organic Fertilisers at Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast. Originally only 5 products were manufactured and sold in simple clear plastic bags throughout the Sunshine Coast region. Over the years, the business grew and expanded and in 1985, JC & AT Searle Pty Ltd was formed when both sons, Jason and Ashley also joined the company.

In 1992, Searles relocated to a selected parcel of land at Kilcoy, approximately 1 hour north west of Brisbane in SE Qld. The site was engineered and planned from its inception to incorporate a very diverse and efficient water catchment and retention system, mass tree planting in selected regions and a state of the art manufacturing facility. The site is a prime example of industry in cooperation with the environment.

Today, Searles sells and distributes products nationally throughout Australia and also internationally. The Searles brand is recognised as a leading brand of high quality products designed to provide exceptional results.

### **2.2 CONTACT DETAILS**

Contact details for the person responsible for implementing the plan (Covenant contact officer).

General Manager Operations – Mr. Ashley Searle  
JC & AT Searle Pty Ltd  
PO Box 183  
Kilcoy QLD 4515

Phone: 07 5422 3000  
Fax: 07 5497 1997  
Email: [searleh@searle.com.au](mailto:searleh@searle.com.au)

### **2.3 BRANDS**

The vast majority of products sold by Searles are branded and marketed by our recognised **Searles** brand logo. Additionally, Searles markets the **ATG** brand of garden products.

## 2.4 PACKAGING

**Flexible plastics**      predominantly, the majority of Searles bagged products such as potting mixes, mulches, soil conditioners and fertilisers are packaged in flexible polyethylene (LDPE) plastic bags. Currently virgin material is used due to the poor sealability, quality and consistency of recycled materials.

*Note: The Packaging group that consists of LDPE plastic bags used for bagged growing media, being the majority of packaging, was reviewed against the SPG in December 2011.*

**Rigid Plastics**      Mainly HDPE and PET containers are used for liquid plant foods and garden care chemicals. Historically some PET is used for water saving products, however we have changed a range of HDPE chemical bottles to PET to both reduce weight of bottles and eliminate the requirement for fluorination treatment of the bottles. Currently all containers are virgin material due to the inadequacy of recycled plastics to suit the storage of garden chemicals.

**Cardboard**      Cardboard cartons are predominantly used as shipper cartons for safe storage and transport of smaller items such as bottles and small cartons.

Previously, shipper cartons were predominantly virgin material with white board, however we have been transitioning across to recycled content brown board. Currently 86% of shippers are recycled content and 14% of shippers are virgin material. We are in a transition to move the final 14% of virgin material shippers to 100% recycled content shippers as we next order stocks of these materials.

Virgin material is used for shelf presentation items due to its ability to withstand humidity and conditions often associated with retail garden outlets.

All shippers and shelf cartons are 100% recyclable.

Other Paper packets are used for Searles range of seed packets.  
Small foil (metalised) packets are used to store packed seeds in.

## 2.5 PURCHASE RECYCLED

Searles has for many years purchased and used recycled materials in our compost and growing media operation and have sought to extend and formalise this attitude to include a formal policy for purchasing recycled materials and goods through out the company's operation. In 2012, we implemented out 'Purchase Recycled Policy';

### JC & AT SEARLE PTY LTD PURCHASE 'RECYCLED' POLICY

**JC & AT Searle Pty Ltd (Searles) commits to protecting the environment by purchasing and using recycled content materials and goods wherever practically possible.**

**In accordance with the Australian Packaging Covenant and by integrating the Sustainable Packaging Guidelines, Searles has implemented a strong focus and directive with all personnel and departments responsible for the procurement of packaging and other goods, to seek the supply of recycled content or goods wherever it is practical to use such goods in the place of non-recycled goods. Careful consideration will be given to a range of factors in the decision process including the integrity, safety, quality, performance and adherence to any regulatory requirements associated with the purchase and use of recycled materials and goods.**

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**Jason Searle Director**

**June 2012**

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**Jennifer Searle Director**

**June 2012**

### 3 ACTION PLAN TIMEFRAME

This Action Plan covers from July 2013 to June 2015.

### 4 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Searles is strongly committed to environmental responsibility and stewardship within all aspects of our organisation. The Searles facility sets a leading example of industry working in harmony with the environment.

Searles has been actively pursuing packaging reduction and waste minimisation systems for many years now with many major achievements already in place, such as plastic bag gauge reduction, use of recycled fibre cartons, recycling of internal compostable products, reuse of cardboard packaging, reuse of office paper wastes and reduction of production wastes. In 2009, we implemented an Environmental Policy outlining our environmental objectives and policies;

#### JC & AT SEARLE PTY LTD

#### ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

JC & AT Searle Pty Ltd (Searles) commits to protecting the environment and preventing pollution. Searles is committed to continuously implement improvements in environmental performance and to reduce any impacts from our operations and products on the environment.

Searles will comply with the regulatory requirements of environmental legislation and approved codes of practice at our Kilcoy facility.

The environmental objectives and policies of Searles are to;

- Manufacture products with minimal impact on the environment
- Utilise recycled packaging where it meets safety and integrity criteria for the product
- Minimise packaging materials used and downgrade/size where new technologies allow
- Include recycling directions onto packaging to promote consumer recycling and awareness
- Minimise waste in manufacturing, warehousing and transportation
- Increase on site recycling

- Minimise the use of energy in operations and improve efficiency of manufacturing and energy consuming practices
- Maximise the use of recycled materials in manufacturing processes
- Train and educate staff, customers and suppliers of environmental concerns and preventative methods
- Remain a signatory to the National packaging Covenant
- Encompass and implement the Environmental Code of Practice for Packaging

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Jason Searle            Director

July 2009

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Jennifer Searle        Director

July 2009

## 5 COMMITMENT

JC & AT Searle Pty Ltd hereby commits to implement this Action Plan and undertake the actions and tasks required to meet the requirements of same.

*Ashley Searle*

**Date: 28 July 2016**

**Name – Ashley Searle**

**Position – General Manager**

**JC & AT Searle Pty Ltd**



**Attachment A JC & AT SEARLE PTY LTD – AUSTRALIAN PACKAGING COVENANT PERFORMANCE GOALS AND KPI'S**

Covenant performance goals and KPI's	Actions	Responsibility	Target/Performance Goals	Timeline or Milestones
<p>Design – optimise packaging to achieve resource efficiency and reduce environmental impact without compromising product quality and safety.</p> <p>KPI 1 Proportion of signatories in the supply chain implementing the SPG for design and procurement of packaging.</p> <p>Target: 70% of covenant signatories with documented policies and procedures for evaluating and procuring packaging using the SPG or equivalent.</p> <p>Target: 70% of covenant signatories assessing 100% of new packaging and 50% of existing packaging against the guidelines.</p>	<p>Existing Packaging Groups consist of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HDPE Plastic Bottles</li> <li>• PET Plastic Bottles</li> <li>• LDPE Plastic bags</li> <li>• Cardboard shippers</li> </ul> <p>Action: Review existing packaging groups against SPG.</p>	<p>Technical Manager</p>	<p>Review existing Packaging group that consists of HDPE plastic bottles used for fertilisers, garden chemicals and other garden related products against the SPG by December 2013.</p>	<p>Target by December 2013</p>
			<p>Review existing packaging group PET Plastic Bottles used for Garden Chemicals and other related garden products against the SPG by December 2014</p>	<p>Target by December 2014</p>
			<p>Review packaging group that consists of Cardboard packaging used for Garden Products against the SPG by December 2016</p>	<p>Target by December 2016</p>
	<p>Action: Review new packaging against SPG.</p>		<p>Assess new packaging against SPG on an ongoing basis</p>	<p>Effective from July 2011.</p>

<p>Recycling – the efficient collection and recycling of packaging</p> <p>KPI 3 Proportion of signatories with on-site recovery systems for recycling used packaging</p> <p>KPI 4 Proportion of signatories with a policy to buy products made from recycled packaging</p> <p>All covenant signatories will have a formal, documented policy of buy recycled products or materials</p>	<p>KPI 3 Searles already has in place a system whereby all paper and cardboard waste generated from on site is re-used in warehouse packing and composting processes. Paper and cardboard waste is recycled on-site.</p>	<p>Operations Manager</p>	<p>Continue recycling paper and cardboard waste internally.</p> <p>Investigate options available to recycle paper and cardboard materials off-site and evaluate compared to current on-site systems</p>	<p>Target by June 2015</p>
			<p>Review potential options available for recycling of other packaging materials, such as plastic wastes.</p> <p><i>Note: From past enquiries, this has not been feasible due to organic matter contamination of plastics, however we will re-investigate any new or emerging opportunities that may be suitable in the current market.</i></p>	<p>Target by August 2015</p>
	<p>KPI 3. Further expanding on-site recovery systems for reusing used packaging.</p>		<p>Identify potential to use internally sourced items of secondary and tertiary packaging for any possible reuse in further packaging protection, transport and shipping protection of dispatched goods.</p>	<p>Target by February 2017</p>
	<p>KPI 4 Searles has implemented a 'Purchase Recycled' Policy in June 2012.</p>		<p>Investigate opportunities to have formal processes of working with suppliers to improve design and recycling of packaging.</p>	<p>Target of transition to all recycled materials for shipper cartons by July 2014</p>

	KPI 4. Review and expand potential to source more products with increased recycled content outside of packaging items, such as office supplies	Operations & Technical Managers	Investigate further opportunities to source and use expanded sourcing of items with recycled content for use in administrative/office environments.	Target by June 2017
Product Stewardship – a demonstrated commitment to product stewardship by the supply chain and other signatories  KPI 6 Proportion (70%) of signatories that have formal processes for working with others to improve design, procurement and recycling/recovery of packaging; AND	KPI 6 Searles constantly works collaboratively with suppliers in conjunction with our own in-house design team to improve design of packaging and minimise packaging materials used.	Operations & Technical Managers	Continue to recycle waste paper and cardboard onsite into composting operations.  Expand meetings with suppliers to identify packaging and material improvements, that could be utilised to reduce packaging used	Reported Annually
KPI 7 Proportion of signatories demonstrating other product stewardship outcomes; AND	KPI 7 Searles currently recycles waste paper and cardboard on site into our warehouse and composting operations.  As in KPI 8, Searles are already including ‘recycling logo’ information onto new packaging and existing packaging upon renewal	Operations & Technical Manager	Continue to implement ‘recycling logo’ information on packaging items that are new and adding information to existing packaging items upon renewal.	Reported Annually
KPI 8 Reduction in the number of packaging items in litter  Target: Continuous reduction in the number of packaging items in litter	KPI 8 Searles have already embarked on a system of identifying recyclable packaging used and printing appropriate recycling information of packaging with the aim to assist in increasing the amount of packaging recycled and reducing the number of packaging items in litter.  Action: Continue to implement ‘recycling logo’ information on	Operations & Technical Manager	Investigate further potential to reduce number and/or quantity of lightweight packaging items used per product to reduce the potential of unwarranted packaging items potential to become litter.	Reported Annually

	<p>packaging items that are new and adding information to existing packaging items upon renewal.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Products administered and approved by the APVMA such as garden plant care products (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides) are required to have disposal information as prescribed by the APVMA. Unfortunately this requirements does not advocate recycling. We are unable to amend this wording or use any additional instructions on our labels. Wording is "Dispose of empty container by wrapping in paper, placing in plastic bag and putting in the garbage."</i></p>			
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