

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
4 November 2021

Pot Recycle: Closing the loop on plastic plant and seedling pots

- Mitre 10's [Pot Recycle](#), a practical closed-loop solution that stops plant and seedling pots ending up in landfill, has rolled out nationwide
- Kiwis can now simply **wash** and return unwanted clean plant and seedling pots and labels made of plastic ID 5 to any Mitre 10 MEGA or Mitre 10 store
- The pots are then shredded and melted into resin by recycling partners Pact Group and Recycling Group, before being remoulded into new pots by Zealandia Horticulture, reducing the amount of new plastic used

Mitre 10 has today announced the nationwide roll-out of Pot Recycle, a practical 'closed loop' solution that stops garden pots ending up in landfill and reduces the amount of new plastic used to make plant and seedling pots.

The launch of Pot Recycle, which follows a successful three-month pilot, accepts washed plant and seedlings pots and plant labels made of plastic ID 5 (polypropylene). The pots need to be free from dirt or rubbish to avoid contaminating the recycling process.

"For Mitre 10, the search for better, smarter – and more sustainable – ways to do business never ends," says Grant Fraser, Mitre 10 Chief Legal and Property Officer and executive sponsor for sustainability.

"As a co-operative, we are on a sustainability journey to make a real, sustainable impact on the environment and communities we are part of."

"New Zealand faces significant waste challenges. We want to help our customers by providing solutions that help them better deal with single-use plastic waste. Both Government and Kiwis want solutions and Pot Recycle provides infrastructure to help address this, ensuring these pots are properly recycled."

New Zealand has seen a renaissance in gardening on the back of the pandemic, with Mitre 10 selling more than 11 million plant and seedling pots every year. Most councils however do not accept them in kerbside recycling as they're often contaminated with dirt.

To participate, customers can simply wash and return their clean pots to the Pot Recycle collection crates at any of the co-operative's 84 stores. They are then shredded and melted into resin by recycling partners Pact Group and Recycling Group, before being remoulded into new pots and re-planted by Zealandia Horticulture, Mitre 10's supplier partner, creating a closed loop system.

Zealandia Horticulture invested in its original injection moulding machine over 15 years ago and has been using recycled material in its pots for well over a decade. However, the partnership with Mitre 10 delivers a true product stewardship – old plant pots recovered and used to make new ones, over and over again. Pedro Wylaars, National General Manager for Zealandia Horticulture, says he's excited to be involved in the sustainability journey Mitre 10 is on.

"We're pleased to be supporting the Mitre 10 team as they bring Pot Recycle to their customers. We don't have a direct-to-customer interface – Mitre 10 provides the public touchpoints that make it easy for people to recycle their old pots. And for every store in the co-operative to be involved in the programme is a great achievement."

-MORE-

Mitre 10 aims to achieve a 20% return rate, equivalent to 184 tonnes recycling volume annually, within the first 12 months of Pot Recycle's national roll-out, and importantly, minimise the volume unable to be recycled due to contamination.

Waste minimisation is a key focus area of Mitre 10's Sustainability Plan, which is helping the store network and supply chain operate more sustainably. Other initiatives include:

- Sustainable Packaging Guidelines 20205 – working with supply partners to reduce packaging to only what's necessary. By 2025, any packaging must be fully recyclable onshore in NZ or home compostable.
- EXPOL PS-E polystyrene recycling partnership, which has so far diverted 287 truckloads of polystyrene from landfill.
- Partnership with Naylor Love, Unitec and Auckland Council is trialling re-useable Timber Pack Covers, which replace single-use plastic wrap for timber deliveries with purpose-made heavy-duty tarps that can be used many times over.

"Despite collective steps taken by the Government to lift the nation's waste performance and accelerate the transition to a low-carbon circular economy, New Zealand remains one of the highest generators of waste per person in the OECD. We know our customers trust us to do the right thing and Pot Recycle is an initiative we are proud to bring to New Zealanders – one of many in the years to come," says Fraser.

-ENDS-

About Mitre 10 (New Zealand) Ltd:

Mitre 10 (New Zealand) Ltd ("Mitre 10") is a New Zealand co-operative with 84 locally owned stores nationwide employing more than 6,000 team members combined.

The country's largest home improvement and garden retailer and one of the fastest-growing trade merchants, Mitre 10 has been a household name since 1974. It was named most trusted home improvement store brand for the eleventh time in the 2021 Readers Digest Trust Brand index and is a repeat winner of Canstar Blue's Most Satisfied Customers Award in the home improvement category.

Contact for further information:

Lisa Wilson, Mitre 10 External Communications & PR Manager

lisa.wilson@mitre10.co.nz

0273 811 805