

**LET'S SAY
GOODNIGHT TO
UNSUSTAINABLE
BEDDING.**

ABSC

Australian Bedding
Stewardship Council



AUSTRALIAN BEDDING STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
SCHEME GUIDELINES

V2.1 2024

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

- What is the purpose of these Guidelines?
- Why are end-of-life mattresses problematic?
- What is product stewardship?
- What is the ABSC?
- What is the ABSC Scheme?
- What is the role of the Australian Government in the Scheme?
- What is the role of the ACCC in the Scheme?

2. Membership

- Who can be a member of the Scheme?
- The role of local government
- Eligibility and obligations
- Benefits
- Conditions
- How to apply

3. Flexible Fee Structure

- How does the fee structure work?
- About the Aggregator
- How are the membership funds used?

4. ABSC Approval for Mattress Recyclers

5. Reporting

6. Confidentiality

7. Termination

8. Variation

9. Definitions

10. Contacts and resources

1. INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of these Guidelines?

The Australian Bedding Stewardship Council (ABSC) Scheme Guidelines (the Guidelines) are designed to help potential Scheme Members and Industry Partners understand the role of the ABSC, how the Scheme works and the commitments and benefits for the parties involved. The application process to become a Scheme Member or Industry Partner is outlined on page 8.

Why are end-of-life mattresses problematic?



What is product stewardship?

Everyone who interacts with a product, from designers to disposers, has a shared responsibility to reduce the environmental, human health and safety impacts of those products.

Product stewardship is about reducing these impacts throughout the product lifecycle and across the supply chain. It aims to drive environmentally beneficial outcomes through smart design and clean manufacturing. This includes using parts and materials that are easier to recover, reuse and recycle and, where possible, using recycled content.

Product stewardship schemes may be mandatory under a state or federal government, co-regulatory (shared with industry), or voluntary - like the ABSC Scheme.

What is the ABSC?

The Australian Bedding Stewardship Council (ABSC) is a not-for-profit entity that aims to reduce waste generation and improve resources productivity of bedding products, in particular, end-of-life mattresses.

Established in 2020, the ABSC is committed to demonstrating leadership in the responsible and ethical management of these products.

The ABSC works in partnership with Australian bedding industry manufacturers, importers, retailers, recyclers, supply chain and all levels of government to transition to circular economy practices.

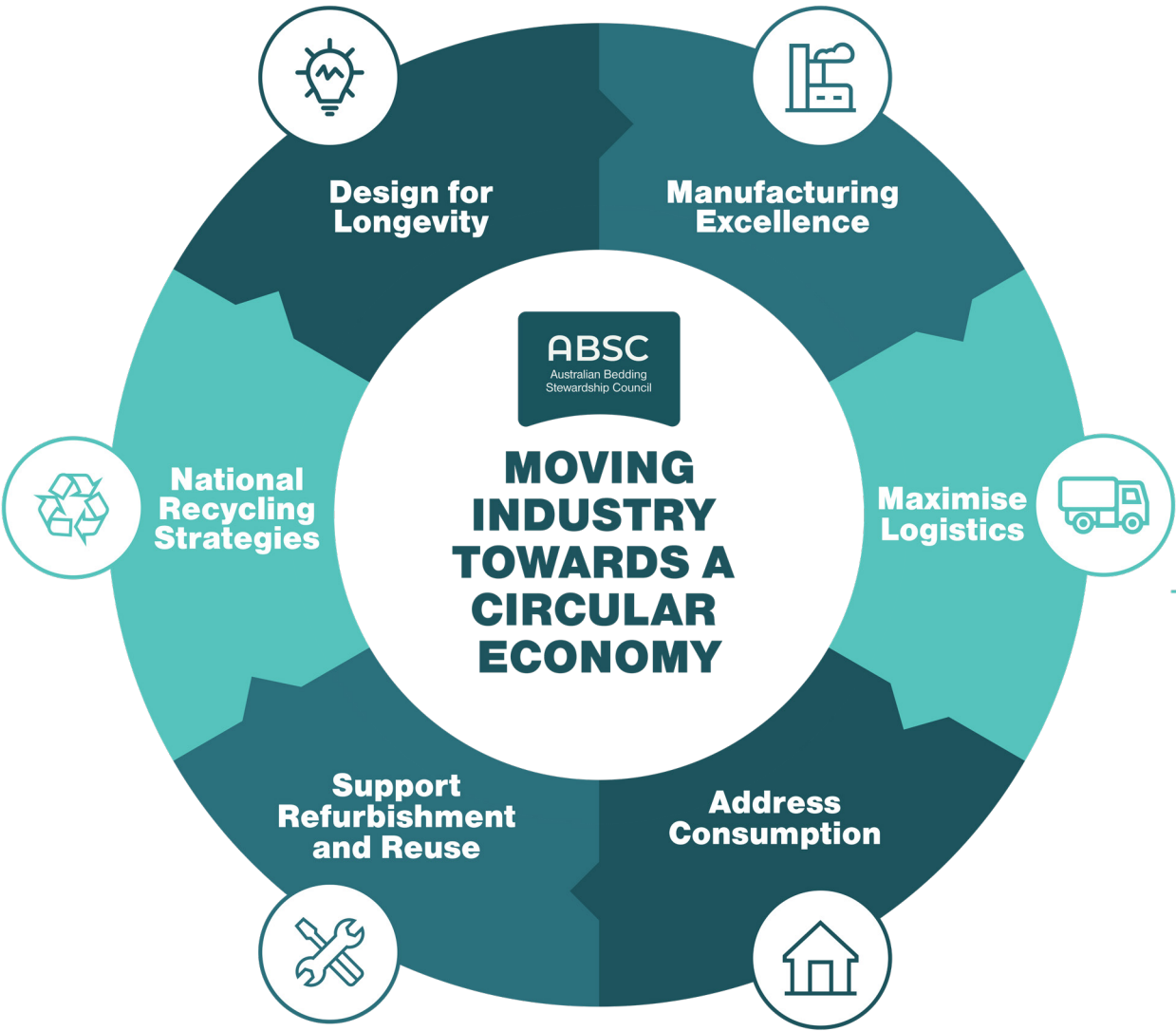
What is the ABSC Scheme?

The ABSC Scheme (the Scheme) is a voluntary, industry-led product stewardship scheme. It was launched in 2023 after many years of consultation with the Australian bedding industry.

- The immediate purpose of the Scheme is to:
- Grow industry participation and commitment;
 - Keep more mattresses out of landfill;
 - Establish a national recycling network for mattresses; and
 - Raise public awareness about the issues surrounding end-of-life mattresses.

- As industry participation grows, the Scheme aims to:
- Foster greater product stewardship in the bedding industry under the ABSC's pillars of Rethink, Redesign, Reuse, and Recycle (see page 12);
 - Create a standard practice for the recovery of discarded bedding;

The ABSC's view of circular economy



Members of the ABSC Scheme include:

- Manufacturers (local and imported);
- Supply chain organisations (such as foam, textile and steel suppliers);
- Importers;
- Retailers (online and in store); and
- Online marketplaces.

The Scheme is funded through membership fees – payable as an annual membership fee OR a per-mattress levy.

The ABSC also has Industry Partners which it works with to drive advocacy, innovation and circular economy practices in the bedding industry; as well as a continually growing network of ABSC approved mattress recyclers.

What is the role of the Australian Government in the Scheme?

The Australian Government administers laws that provide tools and mechanisms to support Australia's transition to a circular economy. It also provides financial support to set up new product stewardship schemes or improve existing ones through the National Product Stewardship Investment Fund (NPSIF). The ABSC received a NPSIF grant in 2020 to expand on the existing limited product stewardship scheme for mattresses.

The Minister's Priority List names the products and materials that need urgent product stewardship action. This encourages industry to reduce the negative environmental and human health impacts of products and do business more sustainably. Mattresses were added to the Ministers' Priority List for the second year in a row in 2023-24. The ABSC has until November 2024 to increase voluntary industry membership before potential intervention from the Australian Government.

What is the role of the ACCC in the Scheme?

On 26 October 2022, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) issued a final determination granting conditional authorisation to enable the ABSC to establish and operate the Scheme for five years.

A copy of the applications, consultations, submissions and the ACCC's draft and final determination are available at [accc.gov.au/Final determination 20-2026](https://www.accc.gov.au/Final%20determination%2020-2026).

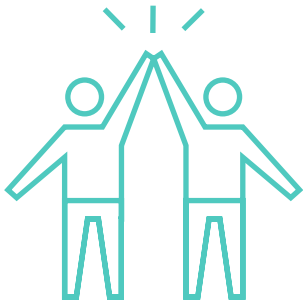


Mattresses on Minister's Priority List for the second year in a row.

2023-24 Product stewardship priority list.

The Hon. Tanya Plibersek
Minister for the Environment and Water.

2. MEMBERSHIP



Who can be a member of the Scheme?

A bedding manufacturer, supply chain organisation (such as foam, textile and steel suppliers), importer, retailer, or online retailer.

Members are required to pay a membership fee and must be approved by the ABSC membership approval process.

The ABSC also engages closely with Industry Partners and Approved Mattress Recyclers, however they are not deemed members of the Scheme.

The role of local government

The Scheme acknowledges that local government (Councils) currently provide a range of mattress collection, recycling, and waste management services. Councils can become Industry Partners of the ABSC to ensure that local government is appropriately represented, and if relevant, a Council may become an ABSC approved mattress recycler.

Eligibility and obligations

Engagement category	Organisation type	Obligations to the ABSC	Fee
Scheme Member	A bedding manufacturer, supply chain organisation (such as foam, textile and steel suppliers), importer, retailer or online retailer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read, understand and agree to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">GuidelinesCode of conductPay a membership feeKnowledge sharing with the ABSC. e.g. about market intel such as supply chain costs, emerging trends, innovation and recovery opportunitiesCollaborate on research and development and project partnerships	Annual membership fee* based on Annual Revenue in the Mattress Category OR per-mattress levy <i>Note: A 50% discount applies to registered social enterprises or not-for-profit organisations.</i>
Industry Partner	Component recyclers (such as carpet underlay manufacturers and scrap metal recyclers), local and state Government, commercial and health accommodation sectors, research institutes, associations, charitable and sustainability organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read, understand and agree to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">GuidelinesCode of conductShare knowledge to identify challenges and opportunities for partnerships, projects or investmentWork alongside the ABSC to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">expand market opportunities for material reuse and/or conversioncollaborate on research and development project partnershipsshare market intel and emerging trends	No fee
Approved Mattress Recycler (See Section 4)	Organisations that receive the entire mattress for processing and do so via: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Manual dismantlingShredding for steel recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read, understand and agree to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">GuidelinesCode of conductEnsure safe and environmentally responsible collection, storage and recovery of end-of-life mattresses and their component materialsDemonstrate continuous improvement of recovery and material processingProvide mattress recycling data to the ABSC	No fee

*The annual fee will automatically apply for manufacturers and suppliers to industry.

Benefits

Benefits provided by the ABSC	Scheme Members	Industry Partners	Approved Recyclers
Use of Approved Recycler badge	✗	✗	✓
Use of logo and branding in accordance with Brand Guidelines	✓	✓	✓
Use of collateral and branded material	✓	✗	✗
Promotion on socials with specific campaigns	✓	✓	✓
Your logo on the ABSC website	✓	✓	✓
ABSC logo on your website	✓	✓	✓
Introduction on socials	✓	✓	✓
Access to member area of ABSC website	✓	✓	✓
Subscription to EDM's and newsletters	✓	✓	✓
Access to member meetings and webinars	✓	✓	✓
Networking with members	✓	✓	✓
Participation and voting rights at AGM's	✓	✗	✗
Attendance at AGM's	✓	✓	✓
Opportunity to participate in working groups	✓	✓	✓
Opportunity to be involved in research and innovation projects	✓	✓	✓

Conditions

Scheme Members/Industry Partners must

- Comply with these Guidelines and the ABSC Code of Conduct;
- Provide accurate information as requested by the ABSC for purposes such as, but not limited to ACCC authorisation reporting, independent Scheme reviews, annual reporting, government reporting, voluntary product stewardship scheme accreditation and compliance;
- Not engage in any illegal or corrupt practice that may bring the ABSC, the Scheme or any member into disrepute, contempt, scandal, or ridicule; and
- Deal ethically and professionally with the ABSC and other members.

Scheme Members/Industry Partners are encouraged to

- Engage their bedding industry network to become Scheme Members as relevant;
- Promote the Scheme;
- Provide all collected End of Life (EOL) mattresses to recyclers - using an ABSC approved mattress recycler where possible (see list on ABSC website); and if not possible, nominate the recycler to the ABSC to discuss approval opportunity; and
- Ensure transparent reporting of activity, investment and research into improved resource outcomes and recyclability of EOL bedding.

The ABSC may

- Require a potential applicant to give further information and documentation before approving or refusing an application;
- Contact the potential applicant or third parties to verify or clarify information provided as part of an application;
- Review the membership fee and per-mattress levy annually and adjust it based on a range of factors, such as the level of industry participation and the costs associated with implementing and administering the Scheme; and
- Suspend or revoke a Scheme Member/Industry Partner if the Scheme Guidelines or Code of Conduct are breached, and the situation has not been remedied by the Scheme Member/Industry Partner.

How to apply

1. Check your Eligibility and understand your Obligations (Section 2, page 8)
2. Read and understand the Conditions (Section 2, page 9 – 10)
3. Read, understand, and agree to these Scheme Guidelines and the Code of Conduct
4. Complete the Application Form
5. Return a signed copy of the Application Form and Code of Conduct to **membership@bedding.org.au**
6. The ABSC will review your application and contact you if further information is required.

Once the application is approved, the ABSC will support your membership of the Scheme by working with you on the following items:

1. Applying your payment preference (annual membership fee OR per-mattress levy) and introduction to William Buck (Aggregator).
2. Online and social media promotion opportunities.



3. FLEXIBLE FEE STRUCTURE

Scheme members have the option to choose between paying an annual fee OR a per-mattress levy. This flexibility accommodates the diverse needs of the Scheme’s members and make it financially viable for all sizes of businesses to be members.

The Scheme’s Flexible Fee structure, introduced 1 July 2024, supersedes the Product Stewardship Fee (PSF).

How does the fee structure work?

Under the flexible fee structure, the choice between paying an annual fee or a per-mattress levy is at the discretion of each member; however for manufacturers and suppliers to industry the annual fee will automatically apply. Supply chain members will continue to pay an annual fee based on their annual revenue of bedding material supplied to the industry.

Annual fees can be paid in full or over two installments.

Annual Fee	
Annual Revenue (Mattress Category Only*)	Membership Fee
\$250M+	\$125,000
\$200M <\$250M	\$112,000
\$150M <\$200M	\$87,500
\$125M <\$150M	\$68,750
\$100M <\$125M	\$56,250
\$75M <\$100M	\$43,750
\$50M <\$75M	\$31,250
\$30M <\$50M	\$20,000
\$20M <\$30M	\$12,500
\$10M <\$20M	\$7,500
\$5M <\$10M	\$5,000
\$1M <\$5M	\$2,500
<\$1M	\$1,000

Per Mattress Levy	
Per mattress unit sold	\$2

Points to Note

- Membership fee and levy is subject to GST
- Membership fee and levy rate will be reviewed annually on 1 July
- Annual Membership fees are calculated on a brand or entity level nationally, not at an individual store or Franchisee level
- A 50% discount applies to registered social enterprises or not-for-profit organisations
- For confidentiality purposes, all data will be aggregated by William Buck

**While mattresses are the current focus, from FY26 onwards the focus of the Scheme will be expanded to include bed bases and top of bed categories; in line with the Minister’s expectations of the ABSC’s remit.*

The ABSC will review on a case-by-case basis:

- Charity stores donating mattresses to their beneficiaries or supplying mattresses to persons who are experiencing disadvantage (refer ACCC determination clause 3.4).
- Mattresses on which a per-mattress levy has already been paid.

The guiding principle for the administration of the Scheme, collection of membership funds, and conduct of Scheme Members should be consistent with the ABSC Code of Conduct. This includes maintaining accurate records for the collection and payment of membership fees, the timely transfer of fees to the Aggregator, and the delivery of information required for the Scheme to meet its reporting obligations.

About the Aggregator

Scheme membership fees are collected on behalf of the ABSC by an independent Aggregator, William Buck – an accounting and advisory service. An Aggregator is used so individual company sales are not identified to the ABSC, unless the company chooses to share data with the ABSC. The individual company will need to sign a confidentiality deed with William Buck to ensure reported sales information remains confidential or unidentifiable.

All Members, whether paying the annual fee or per-mattres levy will upload their Mattress Category sales data (units and revenue) to a secure technology platform managed by William Buck. Software training will be provided by William Buck.

William Buck passes only aggregated data to the ABSC.

How are the Scheme funds used?

ABSC Scheme membership funds are spent on:

- facilitation of end-of-life bedding landfill diversion solutions and commercial opportunities
- research and development for material reuse and new markets to achieve environmental outcomes and reduce the cost of recycling
- innovation around redesign for longevity and recyclability
- raising awareness through marketing and PR to increase participation by industry and consumers
- growing the mattress recycling network in metro and regional areas
- scheme administration

Leading up to FY26, one of the focuses of the Scheme is designing the capability requirements for managing both bed bases and top of bed within our network, in preparation for the inclusion of these categories in the Scheme.

The ABSC Strategic Pillars



4. ABSC APPROVAL FOR MATTRESS RECYCLERS

ABSC Approval for Mattress Recyclers is not an accreditation or compliance program, it is an engagement process to:

- Engage and validate mattress recyclers with the ABSC, Scheme Members, stakeholders, and consumers;
- Support mattress recyclers to divert more material from landfill;
- Support continuous improvement of mattress recyclers' management of end-of-life mattresses and their component materials;
- Establish the collection and reporting of data relevant to achieving the Scheme's outcomes; and
- Establish a national network of mattress recyclers.

ABSC Approval is available to mattress recyclers who ensure safe and environmentally responsible collection, storage and recovery of end-of-life mattresses and their component materials.

Applicants commit to the ABSC Code of Conduct, provide documentation to validate EPA (Environment Protection Authority) licensing, local government permits, health and safety procedures, and fire safety requirements and participate in site visits where required.

ABSC Approved Recyclers will be:

- Validated by the ABSC for demonstrating safe and environmentally responsible mattress recycling operations.
- Committed to demonstrating leadership in the safe and environmentally responsible management of end-of-life mattresses.
- Promoted as a business to Scheme Members, stakeholders, and consumers.



5. REPORTING

The ACCC provided the ABSC with conditional authorisation to establish and administer the Scheme for five years. The conditions include publishing certain data annually in its Annual Report (refer to section 4.39 of the ACCC final determination). The ABSC will work with Scheme Members, Approved Recyclers, and other stakeholders to ensure the ABSC complies as fully as possible with these and other statutory reporting requirements. All data will be reported in a combined format unless otherwise obliged.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

The ABSC will maintain the privacy of all confidential information provided by Scheme Members, Approved Recyclers, and other stakeholders of the ABSC. Only when the information is required for Scheme reporting to the ACCC, a government or government authority (including a Minister), the ABSC’s auditor, professional advisers, and the Aggregator, will it be shared.

7. TERMINATION

Should a Member/Industry Partner wish to resign from the Scheme, 60 days’ notice is required in writing to the ABSC. Membership fees will not be collected on sales made after the 60 days and all reference to the business as a Member will be removed from public materials and locations.

On the expiration of the notice period, the terminating Member/Industry Partner must remove all Scheme and ABSC references from their websites, stores, and other materials.

If a Member resigns from the ABSC, no repayment of fees is payable.

The ABSC may suspend or revoke a Member/Industry Partner if the Scheme Guidelines or Code of Conduct are breached, and the situation has not been remedied on the ABSC’s request. It is in the best interests of the ABSC and Members/Industry Partners to resolve any breaches quickly.

The ABSC may terminate the Scheme, wind up or cease to operate with no less than 60 days’ notice.

8. VARIATION

The ABSC may vary or amend these Guidelines in its absolute discretion from time to time. The ABSC will notify Scheme Members, Industry Partners and Approved Recyclers of the variation or amendment and make the updated version accessible.

9. DEFINITIONS

Aggregator is the accounting and advisory service, William Buck (Vic) Pty Ltd, that the ABSC has appointed to collect the Scheme membership fees on their behalf.

Annual fee a Scheme membership payment which is based on annual revenue in the Mattress Category.

Approved mattress recycler organisations that have applied for and received ABSC approval because they demonstrate safe and environmentally responsible collection, storage and recovery of end-of-life mattresses and their component materials.

Bedding products include mattress toppers, mattress protectors, pillows, quilts, bed bases and blankets.

Comfort returns allow customers to send back mattresses within a specified period if they are not satisfied.

Consumer a person who is considering the purchase of, or who has purchased bedding for domestic or commercial purposes.

EOL end-of-life.

EOL mattress a mattress that is being disposed of by its owner and/or is beyond its useful life.

Importer a business that brings bedding manufactured outside of Australia into the country for sale. Importers may also be wholesalers or retailers.

Industry Partner interested stakeholders who support the Scheme e.g., research institutes, Councils, and charitable organisations.

Landfill a waste disposal facility used for the purpose of disposing solid waste into land.

Manufacturer a business that is involved in the production and manufacture of new bedding.

Mattress a fabric case filled with soft, firm, or springy materials used for sleeping on.

Fillings can include foam, latex, rubber, metal springs, textiles, polymers, and natural fibres.

Member a member of the Scheme is an organisation or individual who pays a membership fee and has been approved by the ABSC membership approval process.

Per-mattress levy a Scheme membership payment which applies as a levy per mattress unit sold (note – this payment option is not applicable for manufacturers and suppliers to industry).

Recycler a business that recovers components or materials from EOL mattresses for reuse.

Refurbishing is the practice of inspecting a used mattress for its suitability for reuse and cleaning it or taking off the old outer layer and replacing it with a new outer layer.

Reskinning is the practice of putting a new cover over an old mattress including over the old outer layer.

Retailer a business that offers bedding for sale to consumers via stores or online. Online Retailer an eCommerce business that offers bedding for sale to consumers online.

Scheme the Australian Bedding Stewardship Council (ABSC) Scheme.

Wholesaler a business that offers bedding for sale to a retailer.

10. CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Australian Bedding Stewardship Council

GPO Box 4836, Sydney NSW 2001
02 8076 9325
membership@bedding.org.au
beddingstewardship.org.au

ACCC Determination

accc.gov.au/public-registers/authorisations-and-notifications-registers/authorisations-register/australian-bedding-stewardship-council

Ministers Priority Listing for Mattresses 2023/24

dceew.gov.au/environment/protection/waste/product-stewardship/ministers-priority-list-23-24

Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence

stewardshipexcellence.com.au



Let's say goodnight to unsustainable bedding.