



AUSTRALIAN BEDDING STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

SCHEME GUIDELINES

Better Bedding, Together

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Australian Bedding Stewardship Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

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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 mutual commitments and benefits for all parties involved. As a foundational communication tool, these Guidelines set out clear pathways for industry participants to join our work toward improved sustainability and circularity in the bedding sector.

Why are end-of-life mattresses problematic?

Every year in Australia, approximately 1.8 million mattresses are disposed of. Placed end-to-end, they would stretch from the bottom to the very top of the continent. Around 40% end up directly in landfill or illegally dumped. Of the 60% presented for recycling, an estimated 64% of material can still end up in landfill – leaving significant room to improve recovery and divert more material from waste streams.



1.8 million mattresses discarded and placed end-to-end stretches from the bottom to the top of Australia.



About 40% of mattresses end up in landfill or dumped, while 60% are presented for some form of recycling, e.g. deconstruction or shredding.



As much as 64% of materials from recycling processes may still end up in landfill.

What is product stewardship?

Product stewardship is the principle that everyone who interacts with a product – from design engineers and manufacturers to retailers and consumers – shares responsibility for minimising that product's environmental, health, and safety impacts across its lifecycle.

It drives better outcomes by incentivising smart design, manufacturing excellence, and high-value material recovery over simple disposal.

Product stewardship schemes can operate under mandatory, co-regulatory, or voluntary frameworks. The ABSC Scheme is an industry-led voluntary initiative, working to accelerate change ahead of regulation.

What is the ABSC?

The Australian Bedding Stewardship Council (ABSC) is a not-for-profit entity established in 2020 to reduce waste generation and improve resource recovery across the bedding sector.

The ABSC is authorised by the ACCC to operate collaboratively, uniting manufacturers, importers, retailers, recyclers, members of the bedding supply chain, and all levels of government to transition the Australian bedding market to a functional circular economy.

What is the ABSC Scheme?

The ABSC Scheme (the Scheme) is our voluntary, industry-led vehicle for systemic change. Launched in 2023 following rigorous cross-industry consultation and restructured in 2024 based on further industry feedback, our core focus centres on expanding national recycler coverage, eliminating bedding from landfill, and leading projects to move us toward circularity across four strategic pillars:

THE ABSC STRATEGIC PILLARS

RETHINK

Championing industry interests through strong government advocacy to ensure policy frameworks support businesses while shifting the market away from a "throw-away" culture toward sustainable consumption loops.

REDESIGN

Engineering products using recycled inputs and design-for-disassembly principles that align directly with existing recycling capabilities and end markets.



REUSE

Diverting quality used mattresses from premature recycling or landfill by establishing healthy, safe sanitation and rejuvenation pathways for communities in need.

RECYCLE

Driving the collection, processing, and high-value recovery of components to feed material back into the manufacturing supply chain where available.

What is the role of the Australian Government?

The Australian Government supports product stewardship through legislative frameworks and financial infrastructure, including the ABSC's establishment grant in 2020.

Mattresses have been repeatedly placed on the Federal Minister's Priority List, signalling urgency for voluntary industry action ahead of potential mandatory intervention.

The Federal Government's expectation is clear: industry must act before mandatory measures become necessary.

What is the role of the ACCC?

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

Full transparency regarding our authorisation rules, compliance mechanisms, and ongoing submissions remains publicly available.

The documents can be found here: [acc.gov.au/public-registers/authorisations-and-notifications-registers/authorisations-register/australian-bedding-stewardship-council](https://www.accc.gov.au/public-registers/authorisations-and-notifications-registers/authorisations-register/australian-bedding-stewardship-council)



2. MEMBERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

Who can be a member of the Scheme?

The Scheme welcomes participation across the bedding ecosystem. Organisations engage with the ABSC under two categories:

Scheme Members

Bedding manufacturers (domestic and importing), raw material supply chain organisations (foam, textile and steel providers), traditional bricks-and-mortar retailers, e-commerce marketplaces, and direct-to-consumer online brands.

Industry Partners

Component recyclers (such as carpet underlay manufacturers and scrap metal recyclers), commercial and health accommodation networks, corporate hospitality buyers, research institutes, material component processors, and major charitable organisations.

The role of local government

Local Government Areas (Councils) are vital operational pillars for metro and regional collection networks. Councils are encouraged to engage with the Scheme to align their community waste facilities with certified downstream processing pipelines, or apply to become ABSC Approved Recyclers.

Eligibility and obligations

Engagement category	Organisation type	Obligations to the ABSC	Fee
Scheme Member	Bedding manufacturer, supply chain organisation (foam, textile, steel suppliers), importer, retailer, or online retailer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, understand, sign and abide by the Scheme Guidelines and Code of Conduct. • Submit routine unit or volume data. • Actively transition sourcing toward circular, recyclable materials. • Pay a membership fee. • Share knowledge with the ABSC. • Collaborate on research, development and project partnerships. 	Annual fixed fee based on Mattress Category revenue OR per-mattress levy (manufacturers only)
Industry Partner	Component 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, sign and abide by the Scheme Guidelines and Code of Conduct. • Pay the Industry Partner fee (waived for Charity Partners and public academic institutions). • Share knowledge to identify partnerships, projects and investment opportunities. • Work alongside the ABSC to develop end-market alternatives and collaborate on R&D. • Share market intel and emerging trends. 	Annual fixed contribution by organisational scale. Charity Partners pay no fee.
Approved Mattress Recycler (See Section 4)	Organisations that receive whole mattresses for processing via manual dismantling or shredding for steel recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, understand and agree to the Scheme Guidelines and Code of Conduct. • Ensure safe and environmentally responsible collection, storage and recovery of EOL mattresses and components. • Demonstrate continuous improvement. • Provide recycling data to the ABSC. 	No fee

Benefits

Joining the ABSC unlocks a comprehensive set of tools designed to showcase your organisation's commitment to product stewardship and verified sustainability outcomes.

Benefits provided by the ABSC	Scheme Members	Industry Partners	Approved Recyclers
Use of Approved Member badge	✓	✗	✗
Use of Approved Industry Partner badge	✗	✓	✗
Use of Approved Recycler badge	✗	✗	✓
Use of logo and branding in accordance with Brand Guidelines	✓	✓	✓
Use of collateral and branded material	✓	✓	✓
Inclusion in Public Directory Map	✗	✗	✓
Your logo on the ABSC website	✓	✓	✓
ABSC logo on your website	✓	✓	✓
Introduction on socials	✓	✓	✓
Dedicated Social Media Spotlight Features	✓	✓	✓
Access to Member-Only Insights Portal	✓	✓	✓
Subscription to EDMs and newsletters	✓	✓	✓
Access to member meetings and webinars	✓	✓	✓
Networking with members	✓	✓	✓
Participation and voting rights at AGMs	✓	✗	✗
Attendance at AGMs	✓	✓	✓
Opportunity to participate in working groups	✓	✓	✓
Collaborative R&D and Pilot Opportunities	✓	✓	✓

Conditions

All Scheme Members and Industry Partners pledge to maintain the highest standards of integrity.

Must:

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

Encouraged:

- Engage their bedding industry network to become Scheme Members.
- Promote the Scheme.
- Provide all collected EOL mattresses to recyclers, using an ABSC Approved Mattress Recycler where possible.
- Actively engage franchisees or store managers in sustainability discussions and implementation.
- Ensure transparent reporting of activity, investment and research into improved resource outcomes.
- Actively prioritise reuse of comfort returns and rejuvenation of take-back mattresses where feasible.

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 based on factors such as industry participation and the costs of implementing and administering the Scheme.
- Suspend or revoke a Scheme Member or Industry Partner if the Scheme Guidelines or Code of Conduct are breached and the situation has not been remedied.

Once an application is approved, the ABSC will support your membership by:

- Applying your payment preference (annual fee or per-mattress levy).
- Creating your profile on the ABSC member directory and website.
- Providing access to the Member-Only Insights Portal.
- Online and social media introduction and promotion to the network.
- Connecting you with sustainability collateral, working groups, and project opportunities.
- Providing access to member meetings, webinars, and collaborative R&D opportunities.

Ready to apply? Contact us at membership@bedding.org.au or visit bedding.org.au to access the Application Form and Code of Conduct.

HOW TO APPLY

Six straightforward steps to join the ABSC as a Scheme Member, Industry Partner, or Approved Recycler.

1

Check your eligibility and understand your obligations (Section 2).

4

Complete the Application Form and the ABSC Code of Conduct.

2

Read and understand the Conditions outlined in Section 2 of these Guidelines.

5

Return a signed copy of your Application Form and Code of Conduct to membership@bedding.org.au

3

Read, understand, and agree to the Scheme Guidelines and the Code of Conduct.

6

The ABSC will review your application and contact you if further information is required.



3. FLEXIBLE FEE STRUCTURE

How does the fee structure work?

Scheme Members

Manufacturers may elect either the fixed annual fee based on Mattress Category revenue, or the per-mattress levy. Retailers and supply chain members default to the fixed annual fee. Annual fees may be paid in two instalments, as agreed with the ABSC CEO.

Fee Schedules

Scheme Member – Annual Fee

Based on annual revenue in the Mattress Category.

Annual Revenue	Fee
\$250M+	\$137,500
\$200M < \$250M	\$123,200
\$150M < \$200M	\$96,250
\$125M < \$150M	\$75,625
\$100M < \$125M	\$61,875
\$75M < \$100M	\$48,125
\$50M < \$75M	\$34,375
\$30M < \$50M	\$22,000
\$20M < \$30M	\$13,750
\$10M < \$20M	\$8,250
\$5M < \$10M	\$5,500
\$1M < \$5M	\$2,750
< \$1M	\$1,100

Scheme Member – Per Mattress Levy

Per mattress unit sold	\$2
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Manufacturers may elect this in place of the annual fee. Not applicable to retailers or supply chain members.

Industry Partners

Industry Partners join via the fixed fee, set relative to organisational profile and scale. Registered Charity Partners are not required to pay a fee.

Industry Partner – Annual Fee

Based on organisational revenue.

Organisational Revenue	Fee
\$100M+	\$10,500
\$50M to \$100M	\$8,750
\$30M to \$50M	\$7,000
\$20M to \$30M	\$5,500
\$10M to \$20M	\$4,250
\$5M to \$10M	\$3,150
\$1M to \$5M	\$2,100
< \$1M	\$1,100

Registered Charity Partners pay no fee.

Points to Note

- All fees are subject to GST and reviewed annually on 1 July.
- Annual fees apply at the brand or entity level nationally, not at the individual store or franchisee level.
- All data is confidential, not shared unless on an aggregated and de-identified basis.

Case-by-case review

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

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

Looking ahead from 2028: The focus of the Scheme will expand to include bed bases and top-of-bed categories, in line with the Minister's expectations of the ABSC's remit.

How are the membership funds used?

ABSC Scheme membership funds are invested across five priority areas:

SCALING INFRASTRUCTURE

Expanding EOL diversion solutions and the bedding recycling network in metro and regional areas.

R&D AND OFFTAKE

Material reuse and new markets, delivering better environmental and economic outcomes.

PRODUCT DESIGN INNOVATION

Driving innovation in product redesign for longevity and recyclability.

CONSUMER AWARENESS

Marketing and PR to grow participation by industry and consumers.

ADMINISTERING THE SCHEME

A focused team that leads projects, grows the Scheme, and elevates the industry profile.



4. ABSC APPROVAL FOR MATTRESS RECYCLERS

Purpose of the Recycler Approval Program

The ABSC Approved Recycler Program is not a heavy-handed regulatory compliance audit; rather, it is an active validation and enablement framework designed to connect processing facilities with major consumer and commercial bedding volumes. The program aims to establish transparent data-sharing mechanisms, elevate environmental safety standards, and build a trusted national matrix of verified recyclers.

ABSC Approval for Mattress Recyclers is not an accreditation, 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

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.

To secure formal ABSC Approval, recyclers must comprehensively demonstrate a commitment to ethical and physically responsible recovery:

REGULATORY CLEARANCES

Maintain completely active state EPA licenses, current local government operational permits, and all mandatory environmental clearances.

SAFETY PROTOCOLS

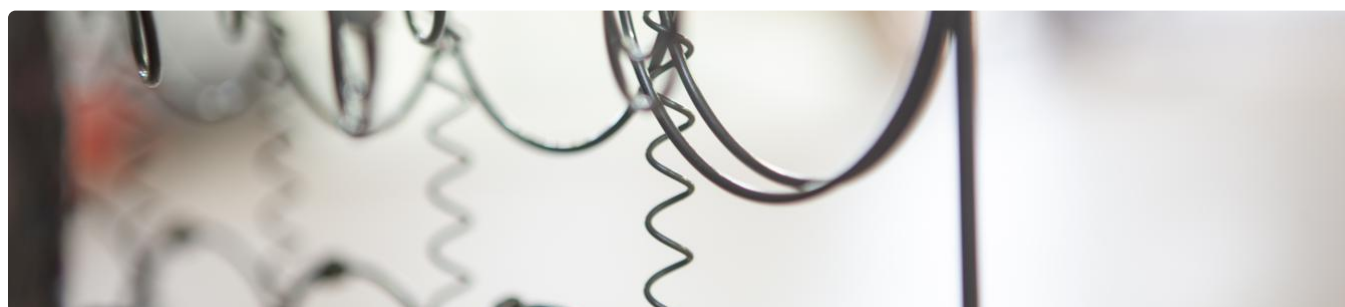
Provide clear documentation of active work health and safety (WHS) management systems and rigid facility fire safety mitigation frameworks.

TRACEABILITY COMMITMENTS

Agree to actively capture, log, and securely report inbound/outbound material weights, deconstruction percentages, and true landfill diversion metrics.

SITE VISITS & DOCUMENTATION

Documentation including EPA licensing, local government permits, health and safety. Participation in site visits where required.



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, and professional advisers, will it be shared. Any sales data will be kept confidential and not shared with other members or the public unless on an aggregated and deidentified basis.

7. TERMINATION

Resignation and Exit Framework

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.

Suspensions and Amendments

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 via email and the Members Area of our website.



9. DEFINITIONS

Annual fee A Scheme membership payment based on annual revenue in the Mattress Category.

Approved Mattress Recycler Organisations that have applied for and received ABSC approval through demonstrating safe and environmentally responsible collection, storage and recovery of end-of-life mattresses and their component materials.

Bed Base The supporting platform of a bed in ensemble form (mattress base / divan), excluding bed frames and slatted bedsteads.

Bedding Products Products supporting sleep, including mattresses, mattress toppers, mattress protectors, pillows, quilts, bed bases, and blankets.

Charity Partner A registered not-for-profit Industry Partner whose participation fee is waived by the ABSC.

Comfort Returns Mattresses returned by customers within a specified trial period if they are not satisfied.

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

EOL End-of-life.

EOL Mattress A mattress being disposed of by its owner and/or beyond its useful life.

Fixed Fee An annual flat-rate contribution to the Scheme, set relative to an organisation's profile and scale.

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

Industry Partner Organisations with an interest in supporting the Scheme — such as component recyclers (carpet underlay manufacturers, scrap metal recyclers), commercial and health accommodation sectors, research institutes, associations, charitable and sustainability organisations.

Landfill A waste disposal facility used for disposing solid waste into land.

Manufacturer A business 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 An organisation or individual that pays a membership fee and has been approved by the ABSC membership approval process.

Per-mattress levy A Scheme membership payment that applies as a levy per mattress unit sold. Not applicable to supply chain members.

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

Refurbishing Inspecting a used mattress for suitability for reuse, cleaning it, or removing the old outer layer and replacing it with a new one.

Rejuvenation A process of inspection for appropriate quality, with cleaning and disinfection procedures to ensure health and safety of the item.

Reskinning 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 means an e-commerce business that offers bedding for sale to consumers online.

Scheme The Australian Bedding Stewardship Council (ABSC) Scheme.

Top of Bed Products that go on top of a mattress, including mattress toppers, mattress protectors, pillows, quilts, and blankets.

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

10. CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Ready to lodge your application or speak directly with our team? Connect with us through any of the channels below.

AUSTRALIAN BEDDING STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Office 3, 68 Elizabeth Street
Moss Vale, NSW 2577

membership@bedding.org.au
bedding.org.au

External Resources

ACCC Determination

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

Minister's Priority List for Mattresses

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

Product Stewardship Centre of Excellence

stewardshipexcellence.com.au



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