

Plastic recycling heavyweights sign sustainability pledge

THE South African Plastics Recycling Organisation (SAPRO) and MyPlas have become the latest signatories of Operation Clean Sweep (OCS), an international stewardship programme designed to keep plastic pellets, flakes and powders out of the marine environment.

SAPRO currently represents 42 of South Africa's leading plastic recyclers, including MyPlas, one of the largest post-consumer recyclers of polypropylene in South Africa and the only HDPE, LDPE and PP recycler in South Africa to achieve ISO 9001:2015 certification.

Signing the OCS pledge were Phil Sereme, General Manager of SAPRO and Johann Conradie, Chairman of SAPRO and joint Managing Director of MyPlas.

"Recyclers form a vital part of the plastics circular economy and ensuring their buy-in is crucial to the success

of this global initiative. We therefore applaud SAPRO and MyPlas for taking this bold step," said Douw Steyn, Sustainability Director of Plastics SA, the licensee and project coordinator for OCS in South Africa's plastics industry.

According to Steyn, most of the plastics associations in South Africa have now signed the OCS pledge and thereby joined the ranks of 77 other plastic associations around the world who are part of the Global Plastics Alliance.

"It is hugely encouraging that South Africa has such a strong representation of companies and associations who have made a public commitment to support OCS and its various projects that aim to ensure that no plastics pellets, flakes or powder are spilled during transportation or at the manufacturing plants.

"Spilled pellets, flakes and powders

enter the environment from the manufacturing facility and eventually make their way into local waterways and ultimately estuaries and the ocean where they can be mistaken for food by birds or marine animals," Steyn said.

SAPRO's Sereme said the organisation was keen to align itself with any body that initiates and promotes the cleaning up of the environment and that they would be encouraging the rest of their members to also sign the OCS pledge.

"Building a responsible, sustainable plastics recycling industry that is respected and acknowledged by government, industry and the general public is one of our key focus areas. To this end, we encourage all our members to ensure that none of their process materials leach into the environment from upstream to downstream of the value chain," he said.

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From left: Douw Steyn, Charles Muller and Phil Sereme