



# Refoil

## Sydney

Refoil, a small business manufacturer and supplier of recycled aluminium foil to hair salons, has created a used aluminium foil, including colour tubes, collection and recycling campaign called, “How Big Are Your Balls?”. Refoil believes education is the cornerstone of sustainable development within the hairdressing industry, and provides information to help salons become more sustainable.

### Recycling & Green Initiatives

#### Vision

After discovering in 2010 that 50% of a hair salon’s waste bin is foil, Paul Frasca and Ewelina Soroko, Refoil’s Co-Founders, decided to take action and provide a long-term solution for the industry. Refoil aims to help the hairdressing industry achieve zero waste-to-landfill, by collaborating with salons on awareness-building and recycling campaigns.

#### Planning

As a test exercise, Refoil provided 70 salons in the Sydney metro area with a garbage bag and asked staff to separate their foil from the rest of the salon waste for one week. A questionnaire about recycling and other eco initiatives was also provided.

At the end of the test week, Refoil collected the foil waste and made a visit to the Materials Recovery Facility in Chullora to test whether the collected foil could be recycled.

“Based on all the information we collected”, said Ewelina Soroko, “we were able to provide the first real data on the seriousness of this industry waste problem and thus start the campaign on building awareness about it.”

#### Implementation

Once a salon starts purchasing the Refoil products they are eligible to receive a ‘recycle education kit’ consisting of salon visual merchandise (materials such as posters, stickers, brochures, etc) to decorate the salon and keep the staff informed (educated) on how to recycle correctly. A Refoil educator visits the salon to set up a foil collection system, then provides follow up phone support if needed. Refoil also communicates with salons by being active on social media, having a blog and publishing articles in leading hairdressing magazines.



Staff at Woohoo Salon with their foil balls

Salons are encouraged to make use of existing waste and recycling collection services. If a salon has no recycling collection service it is advised on a number of alternatives such as searching on the **BusinessRecycling** website for scrap metal dealers located in their area. Refoil has also built strong relationships with local councils, recyclers and scrap metal dealers to better assist their customers and ensure the foil is going to the right channels.

“We were shocked to learn that over 1 million kilos of foil waste went to landfill and that only 1% of salons were recycling their foil” says Brett Stafford, owner of Woohoo Salon, a medium sized hair-care / salon business in Charlestown, NSW. “Our initiative was put in place to completely stop sending our foil waste and colour tubes to landfill. The dynamic team at Refoil provided all the information we needed and a system for everyone to follow consistently.”

All staff were introduced to the new initiative at their weekly staff meeting. Refoil provided Woohoo with training in how to easily implement the collection and recycling system.

- △ They set up the provided ‘foil only’ bin in the treatment room and established a system to keep colour tubes and foil separate from the other waste.
- △ Each day they crush the foil into tennis ball sized balls or bigger.
- △ When the bin is full they then recycle.

#### Results and Benefits

Refoil’s salon customers have recycled over 20 tonnes of waste foil. So far the program has resulted in the following environmental savings<sup>1</sup>:

- △ 17m<sup>3</sup> of landfill - equivalent to 560 wheelie bins
- △ 303 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e - equivalent to taking 73 cars permanently off road



- △ 3,420GJ of energy - equivalent to the annual electricity requirements of 200 households
- △ 4,664,000L of water - equivalent to 85 average sized backyard swimming pools

The Woohoo Salon alone has kept over 300kg of foil and colour tubes from landfill, which is approximately 25kg per month. "The team are proud and excited about what they are doing", says Brett Stafford, "It has created a new team culture that is commended by our clients. The relationship we have built with Refoil has been inspiring and motivating. We have saved money by using Refoil and also receive money for selling our crushed foil waste to our local scrap metal dealer."

"Every salon that gets on board with Refoil means less waste ending up in landfill, which means we get one salon closer to achieving our mission" says Ewelina Soroko. "We won 'Business Performance of the Year' in June 2013 at the Hair Expo awards. These are the industry's most prestigious annual awards. So we're very humbled we won."

## Challenges & the Future

Common challenges for Refoil include limited awareness about the possibility of recycling aluminium foil, and a lack of recycling facilities in shopping centres where many salons are based.

Woohoo Salon found it took a while for staff to consistently recycle. Staff also had to find a secure area to lock up their bin as their initial one was stolen. However, the salon is currently in negotiations with their local council to locate sites for Foil Drop Off Zones and recycling facilities that would be available to all salons.

Refoil is continuing with its program to collect foil, tubes and other valuable materials. The ultimate aim is to make foil and tube waste history!

*"Start now! By raising awareness and educating the community and hair industry, we believe the increased volume of participation will help make a significant change."*

**Brett Stafford, owner Woohoo Salon**

1 Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW) Environmental Benefits of Recycling calculator 2006 (available here <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/warr/benefitrecycling.htm>)



*"Make it core to your business to reduce, reuse and recycle. If you make it a policy and educate your staff then eventually these tasks/ activities will become second nature to everyone. And you might be surprised of what other environmentally sustainable work practices your staff will initiate after."*

**Ewelina Soroko**  
Marketing Director  
and Co-founder of Refoil



**Make recycling at work easy! Visit [BusinessRecycling.com.au](http://BusinessRecycling.com.au) to check out reuse and recycling options for around 90 different materials, find out how to choose the right recycler, download signage to help with recycling, and learn what other workplaces are doing to manage waste and improve sustainability.**



Planet Ark's BusinessRecycling.com.au is a partnership program that has been funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority, and the Victorian Government.



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