

## Media Release

13 November 2019

# Making Child Car Restraints Safer

**A new initiative will provide parents and families with a convenient solution to dispose of their old, unwanted and potentially unsafe child car safety seats. A diverse group of manufacturers, retailers and child safety and automotive organisations is working collaboratively to develop a national child car safety seat recovery program.**

The newly formed **SeatCare** program is expected to commence in 2020 in order to provide families, carers and others with an environmentally sustainable way to dispose of their old child car restraints.

**SeatCare** is a national first, and has been formed to include the key players across the life-cycle of child car safety seats, including manufacturers, automobile associations, Kidsafe, retailers and product stewardship specialists.

Equilibrium, sustainability and environmental management consultants, is co-designing and building the **SeatCare** program as an industry-led product stewardship scheme to deal with unwanted child car safety seats.

Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley has shown great interest in the program and the opportunities it can provide to increase children's safety and reduce waste. Assistant Minister Trevor Evans has also been part of the discussions and recently met with industry stakeholders to hear directly about the program and industry aspirations.

At present, there is no program to support the take-back of old child car safety seats in Australia. Simultaneously, there is a growing public expectation that producers and retailers are well placed to demonstrate their corporate social and environmental responsibility in a very practical manner. As a result **SeatCare** is a timely solution that will address both safety and environmental objectives in a practical way.

Based on the 10-year recommended maximum life span of child car safety seats, national birth-rates, estimated changeover rate of units per child and per family, and other factors, trials have found that up to 1 million child car safety seats can potentially be captured and removed from the market per year through a well-designed, national take-back scheme such as **SeatCare**.

Families spend countless hours travelling in the car. Whether it be on family holidays, driving to shops or trips to the doctor, parents can find themselves buckling their children into their car seats multiple times a day. Combined with standard wear and tear and exposure to the sun and heat, a child may outgrow two to four safety seats before they are old enough to sit in a car without one.

Equilibrium ran a trial in 2017 throughout Queensland, NSW and Victoria which successfully collected 1,921 seats for recovery and recycling - 10,342 kilograms of materials including plastic and steel were diverted from landfill.

It is estimated that over 200,000 child car seats are disposed of every year, with the majority being sent to landfill. This is despite the fact that over 80% of child car safety seats can be recycled once dismantled. A product with such a significant percentage of recyclable material should be

considered a valuable resource that is wasted when sent to landfill.

With a targeted launch date of mid-2020, **SeatCare** will provide parents with a free and environmentally-friendly option for disposing of their old child car restraints. By collecting and disassembling the seats on-site, the program aims to divert in excess of 900 tonnes of waste away from landfill and back into the recycling stream.

The **SeatCare** program will accept the following types of child car safety seats:

- Rear facing carriers
- Forward facing seats
- Booster seats
- Car seat and carrier frames
- Car seat and carrier strapping
- Items that attach directly to the seat or carrier supported by the manufacturer

Once established, it is intended to start progressively rolling out collection sites in mid-2020, with an initial target of around 25 locations. As the program expands, this number will grow and potentially could build to around 60 collection sites in both metropolitan and regional areas, and involve a number of accredited dismantling organisations and plastic and metal recyclers.

**SeatCare** represents a unique and timely product stewardship program that meets community need while also improving child safety and reducing waste to landfill.

#### **Quotes attributable to Damien Wigley – General Manager, Equilibrium:**

“The **SeatCare** program will provide a unique community service that can improve road safety while also reducing waste to landfill through an industry-led stewardship program that is family friendly.”

“**SeatCare** is an excellent example of how manufacturers, auto associations, safety advocates and environmental specialists can create positive waste reduction programs that meet consumer expectations.”

“**SeatCare** demonstrates how voluntary approaches to product stewardship can be achieved in a timely and outcome-oriented way. Multi-stakeholder involvement from the outset is the key to such programs, as is equitable co-funding, transparency and environmental sound processes.”

#### **Media comment:**

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*Images available on request*

#### **About Equilibrium**

We champion sustainability to positively transform organisations. Equilibrium offers sustainability consulting, strategies, management and tools to improve sustainability performance and help organisations grow and develop. With more 30 years collective experience in environmental management and sustainability, we bring together practical services and products that support sustainability, build reputation and maximise innovation. More information: <http://www.equil.com.au>