



Reducing 255 tonnes of plastic packaging at Hilton Foods Australia

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Plastic packaging plays an essential role in food safety and in extending product shelf life, but it also brings environmental challenges.

In Australia, expectations around packaging are shifting quickly; both customers and retailers are asking for solutions that use less material with a smaller footprint and clearer progress on recyclable, reusable, or compostable materials. Against this backdrop, even small design changes can have an outsized impact. By redesigning the tray and reducing its length by 50mm, we unlocked an annual saving of 255 tonnes of plastic and created positive ripple effects across the entire supply chain.

Although reducing the length of a tray sounds simple, this project required careful problem-solving. Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP) trays play a critical role in extending shelf life, so any redesign had to protect the sealed atmosphere and maintain product quality. Small dimensional changes can affect machinery settings, sealing performance, packing speeds and even how products sit on the shelf.

We ran multiple trials with our packaging supplier to refine the new tray, tested it across our automated production lines and collaborated closely with our logistics partners and retailer, Woolworths, to ensure it performed consistently throughout the supply chain. Each change influenced the next, requiring close coordination between packaging specialists, operations teams, manufacturers and the retailer. The breakthrough came from that collaboration, all helping shape a solution that reduced material use without compromising quality or efficiency.

The results of the redesigned trays created benefits across the entire product lifecycle, saving **255 tonnes of plastic packaging a year**. Throughout the value chain, the number of containers and trucks needed to deliver trays to site was reduced, over a thousand pallets' worth of storage space was freed up, and our packing speeds were improved by 2–3 packs per minute. In store, they even improved shelf capacity by 15% and reduced labour time for retail teams.



This project reinforced how powerful small design changes can be when you bring the right people together. Packaging reduction is a key part of our Sustainable Protein Plan, and this work showed that even everyday items can unlock real progress when we're willing to rethink how they're made.



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Any questions for our Sustainability Team, please get in touch with Sustainability@hiltonfoods.com