Packaging industry must act now to meet the demands of 2050, urges Aura

April 23, 2025: Sustainable packaging consultancy **Aura** today called on brands and retailers to prepare now for the world of 2050 and what the future entails for product packaging.

In a new report launching later this year, Aura has identified four scenarios that demonstrate four versions of the world in 2050, and how this will affect the world of retail and packaging. These are:

- **Accelerated Evolution**, a more evolutionary scenario, where we extend today's trends into the future

- The **High-Tech Future** assumes the world fully embraces technological change, and leans into how tech and AI could transform consumer behavior

- **Recovering the Past** explores consumers pushing back against the amount of tech they are exposed to, and the influence it has on their lives

- The **Tough Alternative** scenario, which looks at the tough reality of what happens if we fail to address climate, geopolitical, and technological challenges, to show why we're all targeting change.

For example, in the High-Tech Future world dominated by technology, packaging becomes interactive, offering tutorials, product data, and personalized overlays.

AI-driven factories could autonomously customize packaging designs in real-time, tailoring them to consumer preferences, while digital overlays replace traditional labels, displaying information in the consumer's native language and highlighting relevant details like allergens or usage instructions.

Alternatively, the world of the Tough Alternative is set to be defined by resource scarcity. Access to daily essentials and critical materials like water, food, fiber and fossil-fuel derived polymers is severely constrained, while manufacturers turn to locally sourced, low-cost materials and even mine landfills for waste to repurpose.

Albion Mills, Albion Road Greengates, Bradford Yorkshire BD10 9TQ
t: +44 (0)1274 200 700 w: aura-consultants.com
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This could lead to lightweight, rapid-response packaging solutions for supplying disaster zones, while circular solutions using existing materials dominate to reduce resource use and minimize waste where infrastructure is lacking.

In flood-prone regions, humidity-resistant designs protect essential goods, while heat-insulated packaging ensures medicines remain viable in extreme temperatures.

Gillian Garside-Wight, consulting director at Aura, comments: "It's not a question of planning for the next three years, but the next three decades.

"Global retailers and brands need to assess their packaging requirements on a macro and micro level to survive and thrive through seismic shifts in global supply chains, increasing sustainability demands, and ever-changing consumer expectations.

"No matter what the future holds, they will need guidance, support and comprehensive data on their packaging. That journey has to start today. If brands don't have accurate, real-time data they won't be able to meet current regulatory demands like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) – and we're only going to see more regulation like this as time goes on."

Gillian Garside-Wight will be presenting the findings of the report at SPC Impact 2025 at the Hyatt Regency Seattle, on April 30th 2025 at 9.45am. Or visit the Aura team on Stand 1.

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Notes to Editors:

For more information, please contact:

Sarah Patterson, Velvet PR: sarah@velvetpr.biz
Bhavna Mistry, Velvet PR: bhavna@velvetpr.biz

About Aura:

Aura is a packaging sustainability consultancy, committed to making a measurable difference - everyday. We combine consultancy, strategy, and technology to deliver best-in- class, sustainable packaging solutions.

Our team of packaging, sustainability, technology, and retail experts are pioneers in the use of data and knowledge that gives clients actionable reference points to drive positive change.

Our technology solution, **e-halo**, powers our solutions with clear and transparent structural packaging and sustainability data, so we can help clients optimize packaging, manage compliance and tax liabilities - and reduce environmental impact.

We are a multi-disciplined team of passionate specialists united in our belief that truly sustainable packaging can power positive environmental change.

Aura is part of Sun Branding Solutions. Our clients include the world's biggest e-tailer and the world's biggest retailer.

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