

## Reduce, reuse and recycle

Recycling is one of the simplest ways we can reduce our impact on the environment – and it's easy to do!



The universal recycling symbol is known internationally and is not trademarked. The three chasing arrows of the recycling symbol signify the three aspects or steps in the recycling process:

**Step 1:** Collection and sorting, which starts at home and is continued at your local recycling centre.

**Step 2:** The reprocessing of materials into something new, or something that is usable.

**Step 3:** The purchasing of recycled items by "second round" consumers. Without this crucial third step the cycle is incomplete.

### Did you know?

- ♻ About 400 kilograms of waste is produced by each Australian household every year.
- ♻ Australians produce more than 1.3 million tons of plastic every year – that's more than 71kg for every person!
- ♻ Australians use more than their average body weight (90 kg) of packaging each year. On average, around 16 per cent of the money you spend on a product pays for the packaging, which ultimately ends up as rubbish.
- ♻ Close to 50 per cent of Australia's household waste is made up of organic waste like food scraps and garden cuttings and much of that ends up in landfill. When it decomposes in landfill, organic waste accounts for approximately three per cent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.
- ♻ The most common form of hazardous waste generated by Australians is in the form of batteries.
- ♻ Australians purchase approximately four million toner cartridges and 12 million ink cartridges each year. Laid end to end this would stretch from Sydney to Hobart. Approximately three million toner cartridges end up in landfill every year. It is estimated a laser cartridge will take up to 450 years to decompose in landfill.

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# COMMUNITY

## INFORMATION SHEET

### Are we recycling?

- ♻ More than 80 per cent of Australian households recycled or reused glass, paper and cardboard, plastic bags, plastic bottles and old clothing.
- ♻ 88 per cent of Australian households recycle paper or cardboard.
- ♻ Only 10 per cent of Australian households take their plastic bags to a central collection point for recycling. Plastic bags do not readily break down in the environment, with estimates for the time it takes them to decompose ranging from 20 to 1,000 years.
- ♻ Only two out of every three aluminium drink cans are recycled.

### What happens to recycled materials?

- ♻ Aluminium can be infinitely recycled. Recycled aluminium is made into aircraft, cars, bicycles, boats, computers, cookware, gutters, wire and cans. The energy saved from one recycled aluminium can will operate a television set for three hours.
- ♻ Paper can be recycled up to eight times. Paper and cardboard can be recycled into other products such as packaging, toilet paper and egg cartons. Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 mature trees, more than 26,000 litres of water, more than two cubic metres of landfill space, two barrels of oil, and 4,000 kilowatt hours of electricity.
- ♻ Plastic containers are recycled into plastic for picnic tables and park benches, carpet fibre, clothing, automotive parts, paint brushes and more plastic bottles. Recycling 41 plastic bottles saves enough energy to run a refrigerator for one hour.
- ♻ In Australia, most glass produced contains a substantial proportion of recycled glass.
- ♻ It is estimated that to incinerate 10,000 tons of waste creates one job, to landfill 10,000 tonnes of waste creates six jobs, and to recycle 10,000 tons of waste creates 36 jobs.

### What can I do at home?

- ♻ Make the most of your council recycling services. Make sure you're using your recycling bin effectively – your local council website will provide you with more information on what you can include in your recycling bin.
- ♻ Send your used mobile phones to *Mobile Muster*. A free mailing label can be downloaded from their website and then posted directly to *Mobile Muster*.
- ♻ Start a worm farm or compost bin. By using recycled organic waste at home, you can decrease your garden's need for water and fertilizer by returning the nutrients to the soil.
- ♻ Buy products made from, or packaged in, recycled material.
- ♻ Host a swap party. Get a group of friends or your club together to swap clothes, toys, books, DVDs, sports stuff or more.

### Where can I find out more?

#### Websites for kids:

[www.cleanup.org.au/au/Kids](http://www.cleanup.org.au/au/Kids)  
[www.olliesworld.com/aus/html/recycle.html](http://www.olliesworld.com/aus/html/recycle.html)  
[www.kidsbegreen.org/](http://www.kidsbegreen.org/)  
[www.recyclezone.org.uk/](http://www.recyclezone.org.uk/)

#### Recycling at home:

[www.recyclingnearyou.com.au](http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au)  
[www.recyclingweek.planetark.com.au](http://www.recyclingweek.planetark.com.au)  
[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)  
[www.greenfoot.com.au](http://www.greenfoot.com.au)  
[www.Scoodi.com](http://www.Scoodi.com)  
[www.mobilemuster.com.au](http://www.mobilemuster.com.au)

