

Recycling – Frequently Asked Questions

RECYCLING INDUSTRY FAQs	
<p>What happened to the recycling industry in Victoria?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For many years, Australian recycling has been shipped overseas for processing. However, over the last few years there have been shocks to this system. • Initially China, one of the biggest destinations for recycled materials, ceased accepting low quality recycling materials like those from Australia. Other countries followed suit. • This led to a crisis in the Australian recycling industry. Large volumes of waste was stockpiled, leading to major fires and a major recycling company closed down leading to thousands of tonnes of recyclables being sent to landfill. • These challenges highlighted that major reforms and investment was needed in the local recycling industry.
<p>What is Darebin doing to help?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is and will continue to work with our recycling contractor, peak bodies and government to improve the recycling industry and ensure recycling continues. • Council's Recycle Right campaign is an education campaign to help the community become better recyclers. • A new waste strategy will be released shortly with an action plan to achieve better waste and recycling outcomes. This strategy uniquely approaches this issue through the lens of the climate emergency.
<p>What is the State government doing to address recycling issue?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State Government has released its circular economy policy, Recycling Victoria, in February 2020. This 10-year action plan outlines key actions such as strengthening local recycling sector and the introduction of a container deposit scheme. Visit www.vic.gov.au/transforming-recycling-victoria to view the policy.
<p>What is the Federal government doing to address recycling issue?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Federal Government coordinated the release of the National Waste Policy Action Plan in 2019. This Action Plan sets a number of national targets and planned a ban on the export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres.

What can you do to help?

- **Prevent waste in the first place** – buy only what you need and avoid excess packaging.
- **Recycle Right** – continue to carefully separate your recyclables from your waste and place them in the correct bins.
- **If in doubt, find out** – follow the Recycle Right campaign and use our handy [A to Z Waste and Recycling Guide](#) to learn more about what you can and can't recycle.
- **Buy Australian products with recyclable content** – support local recycling industries by buying recycled products.

GENERAL RECYCLING FAQs

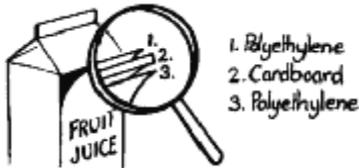
<p>Why recycle?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect natural habitats and natural resources. Recycling reduces the amount of raw materials, such as oil and iron ore, being extracted from the environment. Products and packaging made from recycled materials use fewer natural resources, like wood and fresh water. • Reduce air and water pollution. The extraction, refinement and processing of raw materials to create new products generates air and water pollution. Recycling minimises these processes and therefore, pollution. • Save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Recycling reduces the amount of energy used and greenhouse gases emitted during the extraction, production and transportation of new products. • Reduce landfill. Recycling decreases the amount of waste sent to landfill and the need for new waste disposal facilities. • Help communities and economy. Recycling encourages innovation and can create jobs in the local recycling industry, which benefits communities and the economy.
<p>Who is Darebin’s recycling processor?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On September 2019, Council entered into a four-year contract with recycling processor, VISY, to accept and process the council’s kerbside recycling collections. • There is no change to the collection of your household recycling bin. Recycling bins are collected on a fortnightly basis.
<p>What is contamination?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contamination is caused by the wrong items being placed in recycling bins. For example, plastic bags in the recycling bin are considered contamination. • Contamination causes problems during the sorting of recyclables and affects the ability of an item to be processed into a new product.
<p>Does it matter if I put the wrong thing in my recycling bin?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. If you put the wrong things in your recycling bin you are contaminating the recyclables. • Contamination affects the ability of an item to be processed into a new product. • Contamination increases the costs for processors as they have to spend more time and money sorting and removing the wrong items.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contamination might also mean that your recycling gets sent to landfill, if the wrong items cannot be easily removed. • The best way for us to combat this as a community is to know what you can and can't recycle. Use our handy A to Z Waste and Recycling Guide to learn more about what you can and can't recycle in Darebin.
<p>What does 'clean recycling' mean? Do I need to wash items I put in the recycling?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Clean recycling' refers to recycling that is free of contaminants. In other words, recycling that contains only the correct recyclable items and is therefore of high-quality. • Examples of contaminants in recycling are plastic bags, soft plastics, polystyrene, drinking glasses, nappies and solid food scraps. • It is not necessary to wash recyclable items like tins, jars and bottles. They just need to be free of large food scraps. • Pizza boxes (or similar) can go in your recycling bin, as long as they contain no food scraps or large oil stains.
<p>Do I need to take labels off tins, jars and bottles before I put them in my recycling bin?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. You can leave all labels on tins, jars and bottles when you put them in your recycling bin. They do not affect the recycling process.
<p>Why are you focusing on recycling when minimising waste is as important or more important?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the recycling industry and increased media attention has raised the profile of recycling and caused some confusion about what can go in recycling bins. Council's recycling guides found on www.darebin.vic.gov.au/recycling will help clarify some of that confusion. • The Recycle Right resource aims to support better recycling practice. It is important to ensure that everyone in the community recycles correctly. • Council actively supports and promotes waste avoidance as the primary waste management strategy. We have a Single-use Plastic Free Events Policy to eliminate disposable plastic, we support and promote Plastic Free July and encourage residents to use the hard waste collection and take unwanted household items to the Darebin Resource Recovery Centre or other second-hand goods stores. • To learn more, download Council's Waste Minimisation Guide.

RECYCLING FAQs ON SPECIFIC ITEMS

<p>Why can't I put my recycling in a plastic bag?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic bags in household recycling complicates the sorting process and might mean that some of your recyclables go to landfill. • Sorting is initially done by workers. It is dangerous and time consuming to open and sort plastic bags. Your plastic bags could be filled with recyclable material such as glass, plastic bottles or aluminium cans. They could also contain contaminants like food scraps, plastic wrap or drinkware glass. Even worse, they could be full of dirty or dangerous material like soiled nappies or medical equipment. To avoid risks and danger for workers, all plastic bags are removed from the recycling stream and transferred to landfill. • Plastic bags also interfere with the automatic sorting machines at materials recovery facilities. They get caught in the conveyor belts and jam spinning wheels which can bring the entire sorting station to a halt. The plastic bags then need to be found and removed by hand – a time consuming and often dangerous process that compromises the efficiency of the recycling station or materials recovery facility.
<p>Why can't I put soft plastics such as plastic bags, food wrap and bread bags in my recycling bin?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most recycling systems are not designed to pick out soft plastics such as plastic bags. When soft plastics enter these recycling systems, they get stuck in the machinery. The system needs to be completely turned off for them to be removed. • You can put soft plastics in your general waste bin, or you can take them to your local REDcycle bin for recycling. To find your nearest REDcycle bin go to www.redcycle.net.au.
<p>Can I put polystyrene in the recycling bin?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. Polystyrene products cannot be recycled in your household recycling bin. You can dispose of them in your general waste bin. • Some locations in Melbourne do accept clean, white, household quantities of polystyrene foam (used to package appliances or fruit and vegetables) for recycling. Polystyrene can be recycled and turned into building products. For more information go to www.mwrrg.vic.gov.au and search for 'polystyrene recycling'.

<p>Why can't my drinking glasses go in the recycling bin?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking glasses are made of a toughened type of glass which melts at a higher temperature than normal glass bottles and jars. This means that they cannot be melted with glass jars and bottles at a recycling facility and can compromise the quality of the end product. • Drinking glasses can be wrapped and disposed of in your general waste bin. • You can recycle empty glass bottles and jars of any colour in your recycling bin. These products are sorted and washed at a recycling facility. They are then crushed and melted, and used to make new products such as jars, bottles and fibreglass.
<p>What do I do with the lids from my glass jars?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can leave the lids from your glass jars attached to the jar. Attached lids are broken off glass jars during the recycling process. • You can also put metal lids from jars into your recycling bin separately from your jar.
<p>What do I do with the lid from my plastic bottle?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can recycle your plastic bottle lids if they are attached to an empty plastic bottle. Squash the bottle first and reattach the lid. Full or partially full bottles make it hard for automated recycling systems to recognise the bottle as a recyclable item. • Un-attached lids are too small for recycling machinery and cannot be processed. You can put plastic detached lids in your general waste bin.
<p>What should I do with aerosol cans?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can recycle aerosol cans in your home recycling bin, just make sure they are empty first. Also, put the can and lid in your recycling bin separately. • Full or partially-full aerosols can be disposed of via the <i>Detox Your Home</i> program. <i>Detox Your Home</i> is a free service provided by Sustainability Victoria in collaboration with local councils. For more information go to www.sustainability.vic.gov.au and search for 'Detox Your Home'.

<p>Can milk and juice containers go in recycling bins?</p>	<p>There are two types of cartons used to contain milk, juice, liquid stock.</p> <p>1. Gabled Cartons - CAN go in recycling bins</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made from a layer of board sandwiched between two layers of very thin plastic. Some gable top cartons used for packaging fruit juice have an additional layer of foil and a third layer of plastic. <p>2. Aseptic Bricks (Tetrapak) – CAN'T go in recycling bins.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aseptic bricks (UHT or long life packs) are made from five layers: three of plastic, one of foil and one of board. The products in the cartons are sterilised before being packaged and, as the cartons fully seal the contents, they do not need to be refrigerated before opening.
<p>Can I put shredded paper in my recycling bin?</p>	<p>Shredded paper cannot be placed in the kerbside recycling bin, because the pieces are too small and may contaminate other recyclable items.</p> <p>Shredded paper can be placed in your compost bin. If you do not have a compost bin, please place bagged shredded paper in your general waste bin.</p>