

RECYCLING & MRF PROCESSES

Recycling is a much better alternative to landfilling valuable resources and much of our recycling is processed right here in NSW, thanks to Gunnedah's recycling partner, Recyclit. By sorting our recycling correctly, we can save resources from landfill, extend the life of our landfills and reprocess materials into new products, using just a fraction of the resources needed to create them from scratch.

WHAT CAN I RECYCLE?

Only the following items should be placed in your recycling bin:



Aluminium & steel cans including empty aerosols & foil



Plastic bottles & containers from the kitchen, bathroom & laundry



Paper and cardboard



Glass bottles & jars

The following items should NOT be placed in your recycling bin:



Plastic bags/packets



Ceramics



Electrical items



Garden waste



Food



Building materials



Polystyrene (foam)



Non-recyclable metal



Oil, paint & batteries



Syringes & medical waste



Bagged recycling or garbage



Tissues, paper towel & sanitary items



Non-recyclable hard plastics



Drinking glasses & window glass



Shoes, clothes & textiles

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF CONTAMINATION?

Contamination in the recycling stream affects productivity at the MRF, and hazardous materials can pose a risk to MRF workers. Soft plastics, for instance, can get caught in the machinery at the MRF and impede the sorting process, whereas batteries or gas bottles can cause explosions or fires. Only place the correct items in your recycling bin to avoid contamination and safeguard the health and safety of MRF workers.

RECYCLING & MRF PROCESSES

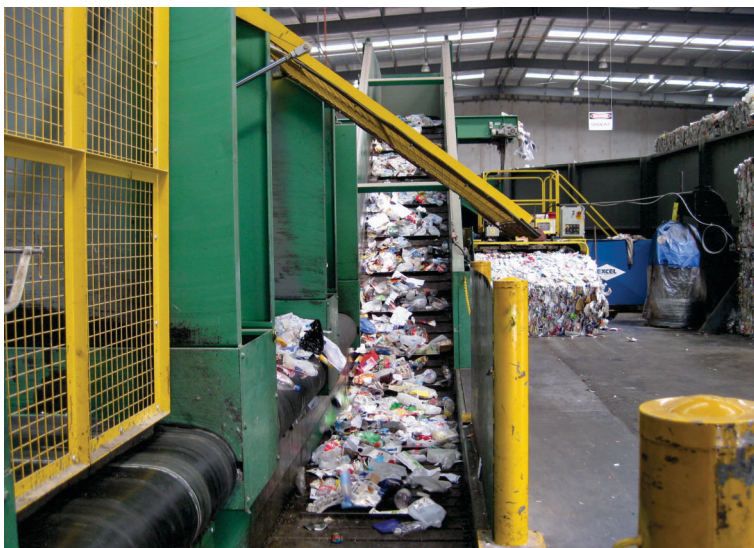
WHAT HAPPENS TO MY RECYCLING?

Recyclables collected from your kerbside recycling bin, are transported via kerbside trucks to the Gunnedah Waste Management Facility. Here, recyclables are sorted into groups based on their material type (plastics, glass, paper/cardboard, steel and aluminium) at Gunnedah Waste Management Facility's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). This is done via a combination of manual and mechanical sorting, whereby workers hand-sort material and machinery such as conveyor belts transport recyclables and assist in the sorting process. Once recyclables have been sorted at the MRF, they are ready for processing and are sent to a range of companies, both Australian and international, to be turned into new products.

WHAT IS MY RECYCLING TURNED INTO?

After recyclables have been sorted at the MRF, they are remade or repurposed in a number of ways.

Plastics: Victorian, NSW, Queensland and international companies buy plastics sorted at the MRF - mainly plastic numbers 1 (PET), 2 (HDPE) and 5 (PP), as these are the most saleable. The companies may process and on-sell these plastics, or make new products such as pallets, irrigation pipes, bottles, outdoor furniture, carpet fibres, fleece jackets, fence posts and compost bins.



Glass: Some of the glass received by Recyclit is sold to an Australian company for reprocessing.

Paper and Cardboard: Once sorted and baled, paper and cardboard is purchased by Australian and international companies to be remanufactured into new products such as cardboard boxes, fruit and egg cartons, cereal boxes, newspaper, toilet rolls and insulation. Some paper is shredded for use as small animal bedding and litter.

Aluminium: As Australia currently has no rolling mills and very few smelting factories, aluminium must be sold to international markets such as South Korea for rolling and smelting. Recycled aluminium is used to make aluminium cans, automotive engines, window and door frames, saucepans and other homewares. Aluminium can be recycled indefinitely.

Steel: After steel cans have been sorted at the MRF, they are purchased by factories that melt and mould the steel into new shapes. Like aluminium, steel can be recycled indefinitely and is turned into new steel cans, cars, construction steel, aeroplanes and train tracks. Steel received by Recyclit is sold to a local metal business.



CLOSING THE LOOP

Closed-loop recycling refers to the process of collecting, recycling and remanufacturing recyclable materials into new products. Consumers then fully 'close the loop' by purchasing items made from recycled products. Australia is in the process of exploring new ways to support the growth of local industries and 'close the loop' within our country, thereby reducing our dependency on overseas markets. Until then, the economic viability of Australia's recycling industry depends on being able to sell into both Australian and international markets.