



NRW 2020 – Research Factsheet

Planet Ark Council Survey Findings

Question - What challenges have you experienced as a result of COVID-19?

- Increased volumes in general waste kerbside bins - this was by far the most common answer - with over 70% of councils selecting this
- Increased contamination in kerbside recycling bins also a problem (~45%)

Question - Most common mistakes residents make when recycling?

- 3 issues were identified as the most common mistakes residents are making – most common is plastic bags in the recycling (84%), then bagged recyclables (78%) and soft plastics (75%). This speaks to the answer above regarding contamination in kerbside recycling bins, with increased packaging being a possible reason for increased soft plastic contamination.
- When asked separately what waste education is currently being conducted, just under half of councils surveyed have run online education/workshops during COVID-19

Question - Does your council provide recycling services for the following e-waste materials?

- E-waste **drop off** recycling options are available for computers, TVs and other electrical appliances in the majority of councils (~70-80%)
- Batteries, mobile phones and whitegoods recycling options are also available in the majority of councils (75-85%)



[Pollinate 2020 Research Findings \(commissioned by Planet Ark\)](#)

Details

- Pollinate conducted research as part of “The Pulse” survey in March 2020
- Nationally representative sample of Australians aged 14-64
- n = 1000

Broad Australian attitudes towards recycling

- Most Australians concerned with reducing waste (72%) - when prompted
- 80% of respondents said they are acting to reduce the amount of waste they generate
- Almost 3/5 of Australians (57%) who say they are acting to reduce their waste look towards recycling as their primary means of doing so
 - Other answers provided including reusing items (25%) and reducing food waste (30%)

Lack of knowledge of economic value of recycling

- Australians are unclear about the economic value of recycling - 43% said "I don't know", 37% underestimated the value and just 8% selected the correct answer (15.5b)

Who are most likely to take action

- Women in general and those living in regional areas are generally more likely to take action to reduce waste - 85% of individuals that said they were currently taking action to reduce waste live in regional areas - highest percentage was in oldest age bracket (50-64)

Reasons for recycling

- Overall, “reducing landfill” and “doing the right thing” are the reasons why most Australians try to reduce/recycle waste
- Younger people (age 16-24) are more likely to recycle to combat climate change and save wildlife than older generations (age 50-64)
- Older people (age 35-64) are more likely to recycle to reduce landfilling

Recycling mistakes

- Of the people who use single use plastic bags to carry recycling, over a third put the bag into the kerbside recycling bin (approximately 3.7% of Australian population)
- One third of people take recycling by hand to the kerbside bin, 10% carrying recyclables to bin in plastic bag. Of this 10%, one third are *incorrectly* disposing of plastic bag with the recyclables



Who's doing it right

- Overall, cardboard, plastic bottles and aluminium cans remain the top items people know they can recycle at home
- Older women in metro areas tend to know more about home recyclables
- People who spend more time outdoors have more consistent recycling knowledge
- Meditation enthusiasts have above average knowledge on home recyclables

Workplace recycling

- Almost 7/10 agree that workplace recycling makes them happy and improves perception of employer responsibility
- About 40% of workers would like to see more recycling options at work