



TOP Recycling Myths - Busted!

RECYCLING MYTH 1:

“The triangular recycling symbol on plastic containers means I can recycle it.”

BUSTED! Plastic bottles and containers are usually stamped with a Plastic Identification Code, which is a triangular symbol with a number in the middle. Manufacturers use this symbol to identify the type of plastic, but it doesn't mean the item can definitely be recycled in your council recycling container.

If you want to know which plastic bottles and containers are accepted for recycling in your area, call the National Recycling Hotline on 1300 733 712 or visit RecyclingNearYou.com.au

RECYCLING MYTH 2:

“It doesn't matter what I put in my recycling bin, because it all ends up in landfill

BUSTED! Thousands of people have been employed and hundreds of millions of dollars invested to ensure that the majority of recyclables in our recycling bins get recycled. Every year, councils and industry partner to recycle two billion aluminium cans, more than two billion newspapers and magazines and vast amounts of other material.

Every day large volumes of recyclables are separated and sent to industry to be turned into new products. However, some people put household rubbish in their recycling bins – at great cost, the recyclers remove this rubbish from the recyclables and send it to landfill where it should have been sent in the first place.

RECYCLING MYTH 3:

“Old growth forests are destroyed to make Australian newspapers”

BUSTED! Thanks to the two billion newspapers and magazines that Australians recycle every year, Australian newspapers are today made with an average of 30% recycled content. The rest is wood fibre, which is residue from thinnings and harvesting sustainably grown timber that is primarily produced for housing and construction. None of the pulp in Australian-made newsprint comes from old growth forests.

No old growth wood has been used to make Australian newsprint since 1991. Long before it became a national issue, Australian newspaper publishers were proactive in stopping old growth wood being used for making newspapers.

RECYCLING MYTH 4:

“Australia has ample space to bury our waste, so I don’t need to recycle.”

BUSTED! Many landfill sites are being increasingly situated away from our major population centres. As such, more fuel is being used transporting material on a one way trip to the tip.

This myth fails to address that we need to make better use of our natural resources and that it is environmentally preferable to recycle our waste into new products. Recycling conserves our natural resources for future generations and in many cases helps to conserve water, reduces energy use and greenhouse emissions and also encourages waste avoidance.

RECYCLING MYTH 5:

“Anything that’s recyclable should go into my council recycling collection bin.”

BUSTED!

Council collections aren’t the only way to recycle, There are other recycling programs that collect other materials and products. These include:

Printer Cartridges: All types and brands can be recycled via the ‘Cartridges 4 Planet Ark’ recycling boxes in participating Australia Post, Officeworks, Harvey Norman, Tandy, Dick Smith Electronics and Powerhouse stores.

Corks: Guides Australia collects wine and champagne corks nationally through a network of individuals and collection points at hotels, restaurants and supermarkets.

Mobile Phones: These can be recycled via most mobile phone outlets.

Plastic Shopping Bags: These can be recycled at most Coles, Woolworths, Franklins and Safeways supermarkets.

To find out more about these initiatives call the National Recycling Hotline on 1300 733 712 or visit RecyclingNearYou.com.au.

RECYCLING MYTH 6:

“I can put anything into my council recycling collection bin – someone else will sort it for me at the recycling plant.”

BUSTED!

Placing household rubbish in your recycling container can result in an increase in recycling costs and can put workers in recycling facilities at risk. Recycling machinery can also be damaged.

Placing some materials in your recycling bin can send recyclables to landfill. For example, if a small piece of oven proof glass or just 15 grams of ceramics gets mixed with glass, up to one tonne of glass can get sent to landfill. Why? Because oven proof glass and ceramics melt at a different temperature to normal glass and contaminate the glass making process. Glass recyclers can reject recycling loads that contain too many these contaminants.

These myths and more are addressed in Planet Ark’s ‘Recycling Myths; Sorting Fact from Fiction’ report.