



Media Release

7 November 2022

**Households potentially sending nearly 2.5 million tonnes of unnecessary waste to landfill**  
Australians encouraged to keep valuable resources from going to waste this  
National Recycling Week

Planet Ark is calling on Australian households to reconsider what they are letting go to waste this National Recycling Week, with conservative estimates showing 2.44 million tonnes of the total 4.9 million tonnes of materials sent to landfill each year are either recyclable or compostable.

Planet Ark estimates 9-18% (441,000 tonnes conservatively) of the material in council provided waste bins is recyclable, while a massive 41-52% (2,000,900 tonnes conservatively) could be composted at home or organic processing facilities.

“These results show that about half of what Australians currently send to landfill could actually be recycled, composted or otherwise processed, which is clearly far too much,” said Planet Ark co-CEO Rebecca Gilling.

“The good news is that with just small changes our recycling behaviours and further investment in large scale food processing and composting facilities for garden and food waste, which is already underway, we could significantly reduce the quantity of waste going to landfill.”

Planet Ark’s [National Recycling Week](#) is an excellent reminder that much of what we currently send to landfill is actually valuable material that could be reused, repurposed or recycled. This year’s theme “**Waste isn’t waste until it’s wasted**” is all about providing simple and actionable tips that enable Australians to keep those valuable materials in circulation, whether at home, work or school.

Running from November 7-13, National Recycling Week provides opportunities for residents and workplaces to learn simple methods of reducing their environmental footprint and preventing waste. Australians can host or join recycling themed events, brush up on their recycling knowledge with educational resources, learn about new developments in recycling policy and technology or discover tricks to reduce what they are sending to landfill and ensure resources don’t go to waste.

National Recycling Week was founded in 1996 as an opportunity for Australians to take waste and recycling into their own hands by improving their recycling knowledge and building better recycling habits. According to Planet Ark’s research, the annual recycling rate in Australia has increased from just 7% to more than 60% of all disposed materials since then. In total quantities, we have gone from recycling just 1.5 million tonnes of material to a massive 43 million tonnes each year.

“Recycling in Australia has come a long way since 1996 and is highly valuable for both our environment and our economy,” said Gilling.



“But there is still more we could be doing to ensure valuable resources don’t end up wasted in landfill. That’s why this year Planet Ark wants people to pause and think about what they are currently sending to landfill and ask whether it is waste after all.”

Planet Ark’s estimates are derived from waste audits carried out in 41 councils across the country representing a population of almost five million Australians. Waste auditing is an important means of gathering information on what’s going into our bins that could be kept in circulation.

Planet Ark has a number of tools and tips to help community groups, councils, households and workplaces get involved available via the National Recycling Week [Resource Hub](#).

National Recycling Week is made possible by Major Sponsor **Coles**, Associate Sponsors **Coca-Cola Australia** and **Tetra Pak**, Media Partner **Seven West Media** and Supporting Sponsors **Australasian Recycling Label** and **Cartridges 4 Planet Ark**.

To learn more or get involved in National Recycling Week, visit [nationalrecyclingweek.com.au](http://nationalrecyclingweek.com.au).

-- Ends --

#### **Research Information**

Planet Ark estimates are derived from waste audits conducted by consultants and council waste management teams. These include 16 NSW councils audited by A. Prince Consulting, 19 Adelaide councils by Green Industries South Australia and individual council studies in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia. Estimated tonnage of recyclable/compostable waste is extrapolated from National Waste Report data on total Municipal Solid Waste using lowest figures of the percentage range found during audits, so should be considered conservative estimates.

#### **National Recycling Week Resources:**

- [Resource Hub](#)
- [Recycling Guide](#)
- [Council Activity Guide](#)
- [Events Guide](#)
- [Schools Recycle Right Challenge](#)
- [Recycling Trivia Pack](#)
- [How to Set Up a Recycling System Guide](#)
- [Workplace Recycling Toolkit](#)
- [Workplace Recycling Presentations](#)



**For further information, interviews or images please contact:**

Liam Taylor

Communications Manager

[liam@planetark.org](mailto:liam@planetark.org)

02 8484 7205

### **About Planet Ark**

Planet Ark Environmental Foundation is an Australian not-for-profit organisation with a vision of a world where people live in balance with nature. Established in 1992, it is one of Australia's leading environmental behaviour change organisations with a focus on working collaboratively and positively. Planet Ark promotes and creates simple, positive environmental actions – for everyone.

### **About National Recycling Week**

Planet Ark's National Recycling Week, founded in 1996, highlights the environmental benefits of re-use and recycling programs, while making participation enjoyable and easy through community events and programs. The dates for National Recycling Week in 2022 are **Monday 7 to Sunday 13 November 2022**.