



Media Release

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## Busting myths to tackle mistrust this National Recycling Week

On the eve of National Recycling Week, Planet Ark has today released *Recycling Mythbusters*, new research that tackles the most prevalent recycling myths that have arisen since the introduction of the China Waste ban in 2018.

The number one myth that this year's campaign will challenge is the misconception that all kerbside recycling is sent to landfill; a belief held by more than a third (36%)<sup>1</sup> of Australians - up from a fifth (21%) in 2018. A Planet Ark survey of 108 local councils found similar challenges, with more than half (51%) reporting hearing the same concern from their residents.

In stark contrast, an estimated 84 - 96%<sup>2</sup> of what people put in their recycling bins is in fact recycled. Approximately 6 million tonnes of kerbside waste are recycled each year, according to the 2018 National Waste Report. The remaining 4 - 12% that goes to landfill is a result of contamination caused by incorrect recycling practices, while a small percentage has been dumped while waste facilities are transitioning to new markets for recyclables.

Other recycling fallacies that emerged from the research include the belief that a Plastic Identification Code (triangle with a number) means a product is recyclable (20%) and the misconception that soft plastics (41%) and biodegradable and compostable plastic (63%) can be recycled in the kerbside system. Additionally, almost half of Australians think single-use plastic cutlery can be recycled at home.

Planet Ark Deputy CEO Rebecca Gilling said that there's never been a more important time to set the record straight about recycling: "Australia is a country of proud and passionate recyclers – but our research demonstrates that we are still struggling to get it right. Despite high profile attention on problematic packaging types – such as biodegradable and compostable plastic, single use cutlery and soft plastics – a significant portion of Australians are still opting to put them in the recycling bin and ultimately contributing to the contamination in our waste stream.

"As Australia looks to build a new approach to how we manage our waste and recycling as a country, an essential part of that work is empowering Australians to understand how to recycle correctly and dispelling the myths that surround recycling."

Ms Gilling went on to say: "A major part of that effort is the Australasian Recycling Label. The label is a joint effort by Planet Ark and the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation that shows how to recycle each part of a product's packaging. Some of Australia's largest brands have adopted the label so we hope to see and hear from shoppers finding this essential recycling education tool in stores."

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<sup>1</sup> Green, Beattie, *The Pulse*: September 2019, Sydney: Pollinate, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Pickin, Joe, Randell, Paul, Trinh, Jenny and Grant, Bill, *National Waste Report 2018*, Victoria: Blue Environment Pty Ltd, 2018.



Now in its 24<sup>th</sup> year, Planet Ark's National Recycling Week (Monday 11 to Sunday 17 November 2019) is the annual opportunity for councils, workplaces, schools and individuals to brush up on their knowledge and become successful recyclers.

National Recycling Week is supported by Major Sponsor **Coca-Cola Australia**, Associate Sponsors **MobileMuster**, **Australasian Recycling Label** and **Cartridges 4 Planet Ark**, and Supporting Sponsors **Nespresso** and **Tetra Pak**.

Other myths identified in the Mythbusters research include:

- 54% incorrectly think **old/broken drinking glasses** are recyclable at kerbside
- 41% incorrectly think **soft plastics** are recyclable at kerbside
- 36% incorrectly think recycling in a **plastic bag** is recyclable at kerbside
- 27% incorrectly think **clothing/textiles** are recyclable at kerbside
- 26% incorrectly think **coffee capsules** are recyclable at kerbside

These insights and a range of other myths can be found in *Recycling Mythbusters* at <https://recyclingnearyou.com.au/nationalrecyclingweek/mythbusters>.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About Planet Ark

Planet Ark Environmental Foundation is an Australian not-for-profit environmental organisation that was founded in 1992. We create simple, powerful and positive actions that help people, governments and businesses reduce their impact on the environment. Our vision is to create a future where people live in balance with nature.

### 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.

### National Recycling Week Activities and Events

- [Monday Muster](#)
- [Big Aussie Swap](#)
- [Events for Councils and Community Groups](#)
- [Buy It Back Day](#)
- [Schools Recycle Right Challenge](#)
- [Recycle Right Quiz](#)

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