








Plastic

Manufacturing plastics from recycled materials saves 70% of the energy required to make virgin plastic product from fossil fuels.

Recycling plastics

All plastics are potentially recyclable, however, due to complex collection, sorting and cleaning processes, only certain types are currently accepted for recycling in certain local areas. Whether a type of plastic can be recycled in your area depends on its Plastic Identification Code. To help identify different plastics, manufacturers stamp a Plastic Identification Code on their products. This code is a number inside a triangle with chasing arrows, and is usually found on the bottom of the products, stamped on the plastic itself.

At present plastic bottles and containers with the numbers   and  are the most commonly recycled plastics, and include items such as milk and soft drink bottles and ice-cream containers. However, recycling technology is improving all the time, and some local Councils are beginning to recycle other plastics, such as    and . Check with your local Council, or look at the sticker on your recycling bin, to find out which plastic bottles and containers you can recycle.

Once plastic bottles and containers are collected from your recycling bin, they are sent to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) for sorting and baling. The various types of plastics must be sorted individually, in most instances. The bales are purchased by plastic manufacturers and transported to recycling plants.

At the recycling plant the plastics are shredded, chopped or ground into small pieces. The pieces are washed to remove labels and left over contents. During the washing process, the various types of shredded plastic will separate according to their densities. This enables further sorting into specific plastic types before the plastics are melted into resin. The resin is stretched into strands and cut into beads or ground into powder.

The beads or powder are then melted and moulded back into a recycled product. These products include new wheelie bins, detergent bottles, fleecy jumpers, street posts, compost bins, plant pots, and irrigation piping. Refer to the Plastic Identification Chart on this fact sheet to find out what other recycled products are made from the various types of plastic.



These plastics can usually be recycled:



Some Councils also accept these plastics:



Did you know...

Australia produces more than 1.3 million tonnes of plastics every year, which is more than 71kg per person. This includes 50,000 tonnes of soft drink bottles, 30,000 tonnes of milk bottles, and 10,000 tonnes of detergent and shampoo bottles. The rest is made up of shrink-wrap, film, shopping bags and other types of plastics.

6.9 billion plastic bags are used in Australia every year. If they were tied together, they would circle the globe 42 times.








Australians recycled more than 130,000 tonnes of plastic in 2003 – 66% more than the 78,000 tonnes recycled in 1997.

It takes less energy to manufacture a plastic sauce bottle than a glass sauce bottle. And because plastics are lightweight it takes less energy to transport them.

Recycling 1 tonne of plastics saves enough energy to run a refrigerator for a month.

It only takes 125 recycled plastic milk bottles to manufacture one 120-litre wheelie bin from recycled plastic.

Sources: Plastics and Chemicals Industries Association [PACIA] 2001; Beverage Industry Environment Council; WasteWise WA; VISY Recycling; Clean Up Australia

Plastic Identification Code	Name of plastic	Example of plastic products	Characteristics	Example of recycled plastic products
	Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET/PETE)	Soft drink bottles, sleeping bag filling	Clear, rigid, often used as a fibre	Soft drink bottles, clear film for packaging
	High Density Polyethylene (HDPE)	Milk bottles, crinkly shopping bags	Hard to semi-flexible, usually opaque	Wheelie bins, detergent bottles, agricultural pipes
	Unplasticised Polyvinyl Chloride (UPVC)	Cordial & juice bottles	Hard to rigid, can be clear	Pipes, tiles
	Plasticised Polyvinyl Chloride (PPVC)	Shoe soles, garden hose	Flexible, clear and semi-elastic	Hose cores, industrial flooring
	Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE)	Ice cream lids, garbage bags	Soft and flexible, waxy surface	Freezer bags, plastic packaging
	Polypropylene (PP)	Ice cream containers, crisp packets	Flexible but strong	Compost bins, worm farms
	Polystyrene (PS)	Yoghurt pots, plastic cutlery	Rigid and brittle, clear or glassy-looking	Clothes pegs, coat hangers
	Expanded Polystyrene (EPS)	Hot drink cups, take-away containers	Lightweight and foam-like	
	All other plastics	Includes acrylic and nylon	Varies	Imitation timber and concrete products

Plastics Identification Code - De-coding Plastics

Plastics manufacturers stamp a Plastics Identification Code on their products to identify the type of plastic that the product is made from, not to indicate that the product can be recycled. Remember, only bottles and containers are recyclable. Always look for the ID code when recycling plastics. Disregard all other numbers and codes included on plastic containers or labels as they are there for manufacturing purposes only. **If it does not have a code, do not place it in the recycling bin.** The table above will help you decode each of the different plastic types, their characteristics, uses and recycled uses.

Plastic Recycling tips

- Check your bin sticker to see what plastics are accepted in your area or call your local Council
- Look out for the plastic identification code symbol on the bottom or side of the bottle or container
- Remove all lids and labels from bottles
- Rinse and squash bottles

What can be recycled in your kerbside recycling bin

- ✓ To find out what plastics are recyclable in your local Council area you will need to refer to your recycling bin lid sticker or your fridge calendar to find out what plastic identification symbols are accepted, i.e:



These symbols will be the ones that you will need to look for on the bottom of all plastic bottles, containers and other plastic packaging you will be throwing away.

What cannot be recycled in your kerbside recycling bin

- ✗ All other types of plastic, not identified on your recycling bin sticker or fridge calendar, must not be put in the recycle bin. Items that have not been stamped with a plastic identification code symbol, and whose plastic type is unidentifiable are also unacceptable. You also cannot recycle polystyrene foam or packaging foam.