

## Recycling FAQs

### A guide to recycling in Strathbogie Shire Council.

#### Which colour bin do I use?

In Strathbogie Shire our bin lid colours are:

Red = General Rubbish (this goes to landfill)

Yellow = Mixed Recycling (this goes to the material recovery facility [MRF])

Green = Food and Garden Organics (this goes to an industrial composting facility)

These colours align with standard Victorian bin lid colours. The Victorian Government is working to align all councils bin lids to the standard colours by 2030.



#### Can I recycle.....?

If you are unsure if you can recycle a specific item, view the 'Do the right bin' flyer [here](#).

To check if a product can be recycled, look for the [Australasian Recycling Label](#) on the packaging.

If you are still unsure, contact Council on 1800 965 993 or via [info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au)

#### Why is contamination an issue?

Contamination causes several problems. The sorting equipment at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) is not designed to sort all types of materials. Some items can get trapped or damage the sorting equipment. This slows down

the sorting lines and can even stop or break the equipment.

Contamination reduces the value of recycling and we need higher value recycling for a reliable recycling system.

Some contamination can be dangerous such as batteries and e-waste, which can start fires.

This is why it's very important that we recycle correctly to reduce contamination.

#### What are the top five contaminants in the recycling bin?

The most common types of contaminants placed in recycling bins include:

- Bagged recycling (place items separately in the yellow bin)
- Bagged Waste (always goes in the red bin)
- Animal Waste (this can go in the green bin)
- Soiled paper and cardboard (this can go in the green bin)

Food waste (this can go in the green bin)

#### What happens if I put the wrong thing in the recycling bin, will the whole truckload go to landfill?

If you put non-recyclables (contamination) into your yellow bin and the collection driver sees it, they will sticker your bin and not empty it.

If a large number of non-recyclables end up in the truck and the contamination becomes widespread, the whole truckload may end up going to landfill.

If only a small number of wrong items are placed in the recycling bin, this will not cause the whole truck load to be sent to landfill. Small amounts of contamination can usually be separated out at the MRF.

**Is it okay if I put my recycling in a plastic bag?**

No. When items are placed in a plastic bag they can't be sorted by the machines or staff at the MRF. It's also not clear what's inside the bag, presenting a health and safety risk for operators. There's no need for a plastic bag, put your items loose in your yellow bin.

**What about a biodegradable or compostable bag?**

No. These act like a plastic bag at the MRF. There's no need for a bag, please put your items loose in your yellow bin.



**Recycle items loose and not in bags.**



**Which bin do soft plastics go in?**

Soft plastics should be placed in your red bin.



**Soft plastics cannot be put in your recycling bin.**



**Which bin does polystyrene go in?**

Polystyrene should be placed in the red bin. Small pieces of polystyrene cannot be sorted at a recycling facility and contaminate the other recyclables.

Polystyrene is often marked with a recycling number 6 inside a triangle. Amazingly this isn't a recycling symbol, it's a plastic ID code. All plastics items should have a plastic ID code on them, but this doesn't indicate if you can recycle it.

**Tissues, shredded paper and paper towel are paper, why can't I recycle them?**

These items are considered contamination and can disrupt the sorting process at the MRF. These items should go in the green bin or home compost if suitable.



**Shredded paper is too small to recycle.**



**Where should I place disposable coffee cups and lids?**

Place these items in your red bin. Disposable coffee cups and coffee cup lids don't go in your yellow bin – at home or out and about.

You can recycle both the disposable cup and lid at participating 7-Eleven stores across Victoria. You can also recycle both the disposable cup and lid at limited specially designated recycling stations such as Simply Cups.

**Where should I place plastic bottles lids?**

The small lids off plastic bottles can't go in your yellow bin loose so you need to screw them onto the bottle. If this is not possible, place them in your red bin.

The small lids fall through the sorting lines, as a rule of thumb anything smaller than the palm of your hand is too small to be effectively sorted at the MRF

**Why can't everything with a recycling symbol on it go in my recycling bin?**

There is no simple answer because currently the MRFs that process our home recycling aren't equipped to sort all types of plastics and materials. Many items with the recycling symbol require special processing elsewhere or can't be recycled in Australia at all.

Additionally, what you may think of as a recycling symbol, the number inside a triangle isn't a recycling symbol, it's a plastic ID code. All plastics items should have a plastic ID code on them, but this doesn't indicate if you can recycle

it. For more information about the real recycling symbol you can visit

<https://recyclingnearyou.com.au/arl/>

Use the guide below on packaging to assist in determining where to place your items.



### How do I recycle foil correctly?

Foil is only recyclable if it's scrunched up into a ball. If it's left flat, it ends up being sorted as paper. If you scrunch the foil into a ball, or any 3D shape, it behaves like an aluminum can and can be sorted correctly.

### Is my recycling really recycled?

We're glad you asked. In short, yes!

Here is the longer answer:

The recycling system includes several phases - collection, sorting, processing and then making new recycled products to be purchased by the community and businesses.

Once collected from your kerbside recycling is taken to a MRF, where it is sorted into the different types of materials i.e. paper, aluminum, steel, glass and plastic.

You can learn more about the MRF we use and how they sort kerbside recycling by visiting Visy's [recycling information page](#).

From the MRF, recyclables are sent to be processed to make new materials. The waste import/export policies of different countries have made it harder to find a home for our recyclables. The shutdown of recycling facilities, especially in Victoria, led to a small number of councils having to send some recyclables to landfill in 2019. However, Strathbogie Shire Council was lucky to not be affected by these

shutdowns and our kerbside recyclables continued to be recycled.

Data shows 84-96 per cent of kerbside recycling in Australia is recycled, and the remaining 4-16 per cent that goes to landfill is primarily a result of the wrong thing going in the wrong bin (contamination).

Visit [Sustainability Victoria](#) to learn more about where your recycling goes.

Finally, a new product is made using the recycled material. You can (and should) support recycling by purchasing items made from recycled content. There are probably more items made from recycled materials than you realise. Planet Ark research shows that most people are unaware that products like road surfaces (40 per cent), carpet (50 per cent) and steel cans (32 per cent) are often made from recycled content.

Learn more at Planet Ark's [recycled product directory](#).