

ACU RECYCLING GUIDE

Recycling at ACU

ACU is committed to achieving some of the highest levels of recycling in the Australian tertiary sectors. To do this we need your help to reduce the amount of waste generated at ACU and to increase the amount of waste that is reused and recycled.

Recycling and re-use of waste are some of the easiest ways to improve the natural environment and have many benefits to ACU and its students, staff and its local communities and businesses.

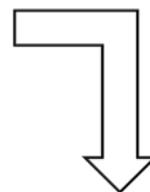
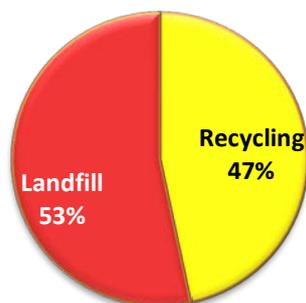
Recycling:

- saves energy and water
- cuts the emission of greenhouse gases
- return natural resources to the economy, rather than losing them to landfill
- reduces demand for the extraction of natural resources (especially mining and forestry)
- stimulates job creation in the recycling and re-use sector, which offer three times jobs than the landfill sector

Since 2013, ACU has generated 6,000 tonnes of waste and recycled around 2800 tonnes of that amount, consisting of paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and metal. Those resources were recycled or re-manufactured into a range of products.

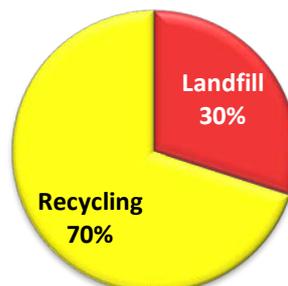
This of course means that around 3200 tonnes of waste was sent to landfill, much of which could have been re-used or recycled.

Waste Generated at ACU, 2013 - 2016



2019 Waste and Recycling Target

By the end of 2019, ACU aims to recycle and re-use 70% of its waste, to position itself as a recycling leader in the tertiary sector



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What's in our bins?

Our recycling bins at ACU contain only a small amount of the wrong material, but our landfill bins contain a large amount of waste that should instead be recycled.

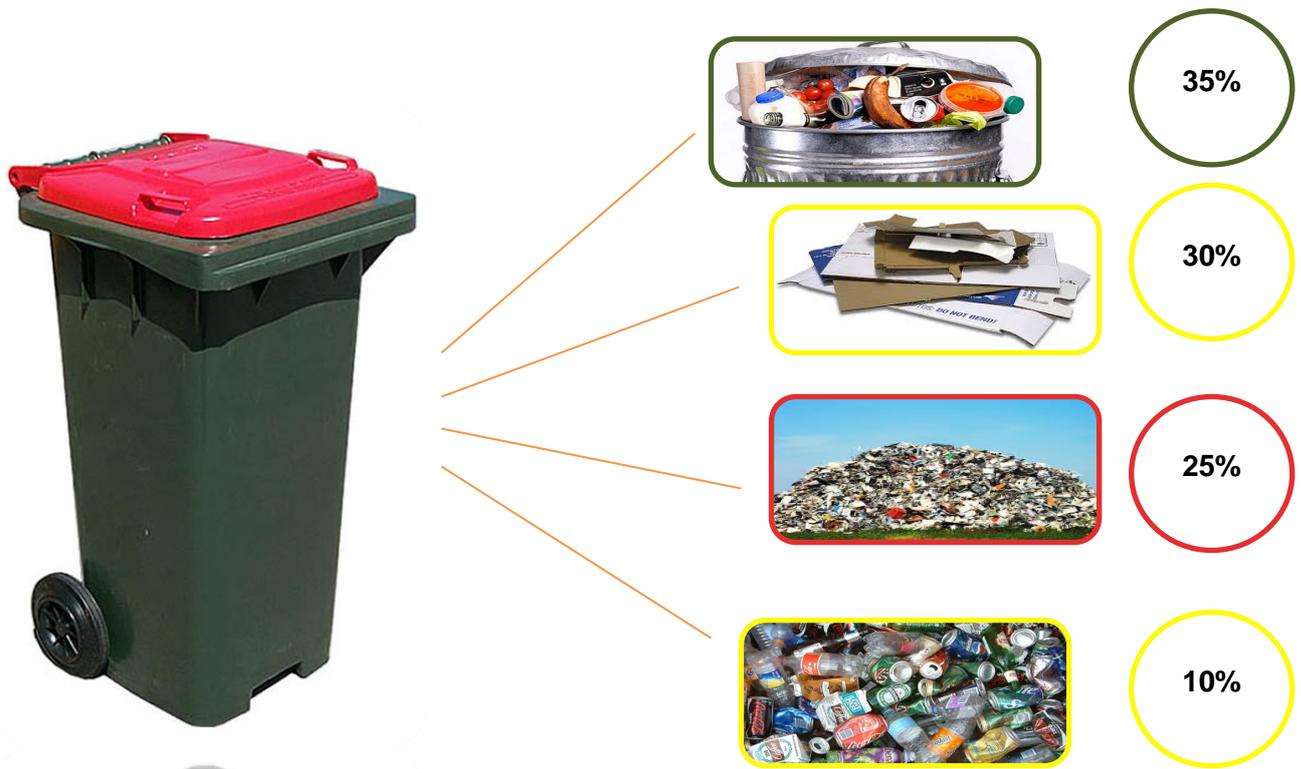
This means that our real task as a community is to get all of our recyclables into the recycling bin.

The image below shows the percentage of the major waste categories that are in our landfill bins. Forty percent of that waste is recyclable and should have been put into a recycling bin.

And you'll also see that a large proportion is food waste: we don't yet collect food waste on our campuses (except in the food preparation areas of some of our cafes). Food waste collection is complex and expensive, so we haven't tackled it yet. But rest assured, we will.

Get the picture

Waste audits of ACU bins shows that on average, 35% of material is food waste, 30% is cardboard and paper, including newspaper, ten percent is bottles and cans, and only the remaining 25% is genuine landfill waste.



Almost half of the waste in ACU's landfill bins could be recycled

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Recycling in your workplace

Most of the waste that you generate in a typical day will be recyclable.

If you're in the office, take a look around: paper, computers, drink containers, newspapers, magazines, cardboard and other packaging, such as metal cans and glass containers are all recyclable and should never be placed into a landfill bin.

If you're studying on campus, the story is similar: food and drink containers you purchase from a café or bring with you from home, or paper from lecture notes or handouts, and food packaging are all recyclable.

But is it really recyclable?

Lots of people worry about putting landfill waste into recycling bins – and sometimes they prefer to err on the side of caution and throw perfectly recyclable resources into the landfill bin.

In fact, our waste audits show that ACU is losing the opportunity to recycle tonnes of cardboard, paper and bottles and cans because those items are put into landfill bins instead of recycling bins.

The good news is that there are a couple of easy ways to check whether something is recyclable

One: look for the recycling symbol –



If you see the symbol, then recycle it, no problem; just don't rely on it to make a decision.

Two: ask yourself: what material is the item is made from? If the answer is one of the recyclable five (plastic, steel and aluminium, glass, cardboard or paper) then recycle it, even if it does not have the recycling symbol.

Remember, it's not compulsory for manufacturers to use the symbol, and many don't, even though their products are perfectly recyclable.

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The Big List of Recyclable Waste

Paper	
Yes	No
Office paper, including coloured paper	Padded envelopes
Newspapers	Photographs
Envelopes (including window envelopes)	Thermal fax paper
Brochures	Wax-coated paper
Used note books	Tissues
Glossy paper and magazines	
Greeting cards	
Paper bags	

Cardboard	
Yes	No
Cardboard boxes	Wax-coated cardboard boxes i.e. fruit boxes
milk/juice cartons such as long-life milk and fruit juice cartons/boxes	
pizza and cereal boxes	
detergent boxes	
tissue boxes	

Plastic	
Yes	No
Drink containers (soft drink, juices, milk, water)	Plastic bags and plastic film or cling wrap
Takeaway containers	Chip packets
Margarine containers	Toothpaste tubes
Yoghurt containers	Bubble wrap
Sushi trays	Styrofoam
Detergent and shampoo bottles	Straws
Disposable plates and cups	

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A word on plastic bags:

Plastic bags are recyclable, but they can't be put into ACU's recycling bins. That's because ACU's recyclable waste is processed not by hand, but by machines. The physical properties of plastic bags means they are likely to catch inside waste-sorting machines and jam them.

But you can recycle your plastic bags by taking them to the major supermarkets, which usually have collection bins for plastic bags. The bags are recycled in specialised facilities. Look for the collection bins at the front of the stores.

Metal (aluminium and steel)

Yes

Vegetable and food cans
Soft drink cans
Aluminium trays and foil
Aerosol cans

No

Batteries
Wire
Cutlery

Glass

Yes

Glass jars
Sauce bottles
Wine, beer and liquor bottles
Perfume
Vitamin bottles

No

Drinking glasses
Window and mirror glass
Light bulbs or window glass
Cookware such as Pyrex
Broken glass of any type

Why are only some types of glass recyclable?

A rule of thumb is that glass used for packaging (jars and bottles) is recycled through ACU recycling bins. Other types of glass, including already-broken glass, have different qualities that make them likely to shatter, which makes them uneconomic to recycle.

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Confidential waste bins

Most workplaces at ACU have a confidential waste bin. Usually, they are a large wheelie bin, and they have a locked lid and a narrow slot in the lid just large enough for waste paper, like the image below:



How to use these bins:

Confidential waste bins are only for documents that contain information that for reasons of policy or privacy must be destroyed.

Examples include:

- Medical records
- Legal documents
- Personnel files
- Academic results
- Contracts and tenders
- Finance records

It's essential that only confidential documents are placed in these bins. All other paper waste must be recycled in normal paper-waste bins or yellow recycling bins.

This is because it costs ACU much more to dispose of confidential waste than to recycle general paper waste.

The higher cost is the consequence of the high level of security associated with the collection, transport and processing of confidential waste.

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Top five recycling tips

1. **Remember the Recyclable 5:** resources made of paper, cardboard, metal (aluminium and steel) and durable plastic and durable glass is recyclable in ACU recycling bins.

The Usual Suspects:



2. You can safely dispose of all empty aerosol cans and containers that previously held household chemicals in your recycling bin.
3. You don't need to rinse your recyclable waste before you put it in the bin, *but do* empty food waste into the landfill bin before you put a container into the recycling bin.
4. Don't put your recyclables into plastic bags. Always place the items loosely into your recycling bin. Plastic bags cannot be opened at the recycling facilities, so they are diverted to landfill instead.
5. Remove the lids from containers and bottles before you place them in the recycling bin. This will save space in your bin and ensure that each material type is recycled.

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What happens to my recycling?

ACU's recyclable waste is collected from each campus by a recycling truck that transports the resources to a recycling facility. At the facility, it is put through a number of mechanical and in a very few cases, manual, sorting processes.

Manual process:

Workers will check the stream of waste to separate items unsuitable for recycling. These items include nappies, electronics, car batteries, paint and chemicals, and food.

In the next step, the workers will sort the rest of the waste into different recyclable streams, such as plastic, glass, paper, and cardboard, etc.

Finally, the categories of items are put into bales and sold to companies that reprocess the waste into new products.

Mechanical process:

Recyclable items are transferred directly from a truck into a set of waste-sorting machines.

These machines then process the items by their size and the type of material.

The various types of material are placed into bales and sold to companies that reprocess the waste into new products.



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More information & feedback:

Please contact the National Sustainability Manager at mark.doggett@acu.edu.au for more information on waste management at ACU or to provide feedback on how to improve future editions of this guide.