

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PLASTICS YOU RECYCLE?

Hobsons Bay uses a local contractor who processes mixed recycling, including plastics. Each type of plastic is processed differently and has its own specific end market. Plastics 1, 2 and 5 can go in

your yellow-lid bin, as these types of plastics can be made into new products. Other plastics, such as washing baskets and toys, contaminate otherwise clean recycling streams.



NOT ALL CODED PLASTICS ARE CREATED EQUAL

Some packaging with the code number 1, 2 and 5 is thinned out to form a particular shape, which makes it unsuitable for our recycling. This includes fruit punnets, meat trays and magazine wrap, which go in the rubbish bin.

Plastic containers with the codes 1, 2 and 5 that can go in the mixed recycling include: milk and juice bottles, detergent bottles, yoghurt, margarine and ice cream tubs. Don't forget to remove lids.

PLASTICS HACK

Plastic packaging is useful: it's light and tough, makes transportation easy and reduces spoilage – decreasing emissions. But these days, **THE WORLD PRODUCES HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF TONNES OF PLASTICS EVERY YEAR**

Most of it ends up in landfill; a small portion is recycled. Estimates suggest that plastic takes 450 years to biodegrade fully, so plastics produced in the last century are still around in some form.

Since 2017, overseas markets for some of Australia's plastics have steadily shut down. At the same time, plastics pollution permeates our air, sea and soil. We need to reduce the volume of plastics produced, and recycle more.

New plastics are cheap, so there is little incentive for industry to use recycled plastics which are more expensive. But there are compelling environmental savings for using recycled plastics.

According to Sustainability Victoria, producing plastics from recycled materials saves 88 per cent of the

energy required to make plastic using raw materials of oil and gas.

Society has traditionally supported a linear economy in which items are used once, then thrown away. By recycling plastics, we support a circular economy in which plastics stay in the resource pool and are recycled back into new products – reducing waste, energy usage and the need to use new resources.



  PET(E) (polyethylene terephthalate)	  HDPE (high-density polyethylene)	  PP (polypropylene)	
  PVC (polyvinyl chloride)	  LDPE (low-density polyethylene)	  PS (polystyrene)	  OTHER (other plastics)

SYMBOLS -



The International Resin Identification Coding System (RIC) on plastic packaging was developed to identify from which type of plastic resin a product is made. Each type is represented by a number, from 1 to 7, inside a triangular symbol – a symbol that looks a lot like the recycle symbol.

Naturally, consumers often interpret the RIC as a sign that the item can be recycled, but the presence of a code does not necessarily mean that it can be recycled.

Some packaging that's made locally also includes the Australasian Recycling Label symbols. These indicate how to separate packaging into its various parts and how to dispose of each part.

The range of everyday products available at supermarkets includes a mix of imported and locally produced products – and packaging. Always check the plastic codes on packaging when shopping, and choose packaging that can be recycled.



THE FUTURE OF PLASTICS



The Australian Government committed to ensuring all Australian packaging is recyclable, compostable or reusable by 2025. To achieve this, packaging must be designed for circularity. Nation-wide improvements to the way discarded packaging is collected must be implemented – improvements such as the four-bin kerbside service used in Hobsons Bay. Also, processing infrastructure and end markets for recycled plastics must be developed.

Plastic packaging produced overseas may still be made using non-recyclable materials, so it's good practice to check the packaging on products you buy.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Choose products packaged only in recyclable materials
- Only put plastic bottles with the codes 1 and 2, and containers with code 5 in your mixed recycling bin. Remove lids (which are often made from mixed plastics) and rinse containers
- Take a reusable water bottle and lunch box to avoid using plastic bottles and sandwich bags
- Take re-usable shopping and produce bags to the supermarket to avoid the need for plastic carry bags
- Recycle soft plastics, such as cereal liner bags and pasta bags, at participating supermarkets through REDcycle (redcycle.net.au)
- Spread the word: knowledge is power

If you're in any doubt about which bin a household item can go in, check hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/recycling for the interactive feature: Which Bin Does this Go in?

Or download the Recycling 2.0 app, available now on App Store and Google Play.

