

HOW YOU RECYCLE IS IMPORTANT



Contamination affects worker safety and Kurrajong Recycling's bottom line

Kurrajong Recycling relies on you to 'recycle right' so we can safely and economically process and sell the items in your recycling bin. We receive large amounts of non-recyclable items (called contamination) from our six client councils' bins.

Contamination affects our workers' welfare and the economic viability of Kurrajong Recycling as taking non-recyclable items to the Gregadoo Waste Management Centre costs \$145 a tonne. This adds up to thousands of dollars in costs each year.

Non-recyclable items 'contaminate' recyclable items by:

- having to be sorted from the recyclable items brought to Kurrajong Recycling and sent to landfill
- tainting recyclable items with soil, oil, food, chemicals or green waste, and making them unsuitable for recycling. They then go to landfill.

WHAT IS CONTAMINATION?

1. Items in your recycling bin that we cannot recycle (e.g. hoses, soft plastic, toys, bedding).
2. Recyclable containers not rinsed or with some contents remaining (e.g. food, milk, shampoo).
3. Recyclable items spoiled by materials put in the bin with them (e.g. food, soil, plant material, paint, oil, toxic chemicals, shredded paper) that makes them non-recyclable.

WHY IS CONTAMINATION A PROBLEM?

- Dangerous and unpleasant for our workers
- Damages recycling machinery
- Slows the sorting process/double-handling
- Reduces marketability of materials
- Costly payment of landfill disposal fees
- Loss of items that could be recycled to landfill
- Our Council rates are used to monitor bins and deal with 'repeat offenders'.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✓ Check the diagrams on the bin lid, our website, and your Council's website for what can be recycled
- ✓ If in doubt about an item, throw it out
- ✓ Only place loose items in the recycling bin
- ✓ Empty and rinse containers
- ✓ Drop off your computer and television recycling to Kurrajong Recycling

YES THANKS: empty household glass bottles & jars, plastic bottles and containers, aluminium cans and foil (foil shaped into an orange-sized ball at least or larger), steel cans and aerosols, paper and cardboard. Remove lids & place in recycling bin too.

NO THANKS: tied-up plastic bags full of items

NO THANKS: soft plastics, hoses, rope, clothing or lengths of plastic or cord that entangles machinery

NO THANKS: bedding, curtains, sleeping bags, bags, shoes, backpacks, toys, trampoline netting, carpet, polystyrene, washing baskets, broken furniture

NO THANKS: nappies, syringes, garden waste or food scraps, toothbrushes or toothpaste tubes, shredded paper

NO THANKS: window glass, drink or cooking ware glass, crockery, electrical appliances, disposable plastic plates or cutlery, Xmas trees and decorations, food pouches

NO THANKS: scrap metal, batteries, paint, chemicals, gas bottles, motor oil, smoke detectors, fluoro globes and tubes, car batteries. Take these to your *Community Recycling Centre* at your waste management centre

THANKS FOR 'RECYCLING RIGHT'

MORE ON CONTAMINATION

Putting non-recyclable items in your recycling bin affects our recycling process in a number of ways.

HAZARDOUS TO WORKERS

Items such as syringe needles, chemical containers, and batteries are hazardous to workers processing what should be safe and recyclable materials. Pieces of scrap metal can become projectiles on some processing machinery, or fall into the glass-crushing area. Microwave ovens, fans and engine blocks are some of the heavy contaminants that are difficult and hazardous to remove from a moving sorting belt.

UNPLEASANT WORKING CONDITIONS

The odor and visual impact of items such as decaying food left in containers, green waste, animal carcasses, and nappies makes working conditions unnecessarily unpleasant for our workers – especially in summer. These items also attract flies, bees, dogs, cats, mice and rats.

DAMAGE TO RECYCLING MACHINERY

Some non-recyclable items become tangled in processing machinery causing costly maintenance work, shutdowns, machinery damage and processing delays (e.g. clothing, hoses, dripper hoses, plastic strapping, electric cords, string, wire, rope and plastic bags). Each day, Kurrajong Recycling workers must regularly remove non-recyclable items tangled in sorting machinery.

REDUCED MARKETABILITY OF MATERIALS

Large amounts of non-recyclable items means handling materials with no value and a high disposal cost. This makes sorting more difficult and time consuming, and can result in higher contamination rates in our products, e.g. some plastics found in bales of cardboard or aluminium. This may require re-sorting to ensure a saleable product for our buyers and manufacturers like Oatly Resources and Visey. Our products can be devalued or rejected due to contamination levels.

COSTS OF DISPOSAL TO LANDFILL

Non-recyclable items go to landfill at great expense to Kurrajong Recycling (labour and landfill fees) as the materials must be removed, stored and transported to landfill.

DOUBLE-HANDLING OF MATERIALS

When placed in the yellow-lid bin, non-recyclable items increase their handling costs and carbon footprint by not going directly to landfill via the general waste bin.

LOSS OF ITEMS THAT COULD BE RECYCLED

Materials that taint recyclable items (e.g. rotting food and green waste, oil, soil, paint) reduce the amount of product that could be recycled. Items placed in tied-up plastic bags also go to landfill, as they cannot be safely opened by our workers. Recycling collection trucks must take their load to landfill if the contamination rate makes it unviable to process. For example, if there are large amounts of oil, soil or decaying green waste throughout the whole load.

COUNCIL RATES USED TO MONITOR BINS

Many councils now use cameras on collection trucks to monitor contamination of recycling bins and have procedures to ensure their correct use e.g. warning notices and resident hiring larger bins

LESS SPACE IN YOUR RECYCLING BIN

Non-recyclable items reduce space in your recycling bin for items that could be recycled.

The high contamination rate of recycled materials sold to China from all over the world was one of the reasons they now only accept the largely unachievable contamination rate of 0.05%.

WE RELY ON YOUR RECYCLING SKILLS

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