

Rubbish is not for trashing

Kerbside recycling needs expansion and consistency across local government areas to help lift Australia's recycling rate, according to the Australian Packaging Covenant (APC).



Credit: Mike Clarke/istockphoto

The APC conducted research on the Australian waste and recycling industry and has made recommendations to help address gaps to ensure that more packaging is recycled.

Stan Moore, CEO of the APC said, 'Kerbside collection of packaging is now well entrenched in most regional and urban areas around Australia. However inconsistencies leave residents confused about what is able to be recycled, and recyclable packaging ends up in the red bin.'

The expansion of a full kerbside collection to all households, uniform acceptance of materials, and stronger adoption of national standards that deal with bin design and colour would help increase domestic recycling rates.

Areas where kerbside collection is not feasible, such as regional areas, would also benefit from more drop-off facilities for all recyclable packaging.

'The expansion of kerbside recycling to include flexible films recycling, for example, would mean that everything from plastic carry bags, bread bags and plastic wrapping from a diverse range of items could be recycled into new product,' Mr Moore said.

'The APC is committed to finding effective solutions to increase recycling and decrease the amount of resources going to landfill. We will use the recommendations from this report and work with state and territories to fund initiatives which continue to drive the recycling rate upward.'

Other recommendations from the APC funded research include:

1. Increase 'at work' recycling collections.
2. Investment in infrastructure to increase the sorting of glass.
3. Investment in the Australian reprocessing industry in addition to making sure our current recyclable material is being transported to markets efficiently.
4. Commercial and industrial materials sorting facility infrastructure development, and specific materials reprocessing such as polystyrene.
5. Increase recovery of fibre based packaging, glass and plastics from households and businesses.

'All parties in the packaging supply chain and all levels of government remain focused on the achievement of an overall recycling rate of 70 per cent by 2015,' Mr Moore said.

The Australian Packaging Covenant (APC) is an initiative which brings industry, government and community groups together to minimise the environmental impacts of packaging by encouraging better packaging design and higher recycling rates.

Source: APC

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