



# Monthly Recycling Guide

Welcome to the first MASG Recycling information page. We have been donated money by a very generous community member who wanted to help our shire get the facts about recycling. There has been a lot of change and confusion on this topic for over a year now. So we will be publishing a page in the Castlemaine Mail each month with correct information about recycling here in Mount Alexander Shire. This page will also be available as an online resource on the MASG website [masg.org.au](http://masg.org.au)

Over the next year we will cover all sorts of topics related to recycling. We will look at the company that takes the kerbside yellow lidded bins, Veolia, looking at who they are and what they do with the contents of our bins. We will also look at other types of recycling like light globes, batteries, e-waste, pens, toothpaste tubes, polystyrene and more!

There will be hot tips on reducing your waste in general in our Beyond Recycling - Zero Waste Tips section and we'll do some myth busting by investigating what the true story is behind some of these common recycling rumours.

But first up, lets get caught up with the story of recycling in our shire so far.

Household kerbside recycling schemes became common in the 1980s and early 1990s and today around 91% of Australian households have access to a kerbside recycling collection.

Fast forward to what happened in 2017-2018 and what has been labelled the "recycling crisis", which was caused by a combination of issues. Firstly, China being a large net importer of waste materials enforced their policy of only receiving a certain standard of imported material (minimal contamination) which was difficult for the Australian systems of collecting/ processing to meet. Compounding the problem was a drastic fall in the value of sorted recyclable material. Both issues meant it was harder to find a home for commingled material.

Government and industry have learnt that we need to be more self-sufficient and invest in more processing infrastructure in Australia, hence the recent announcements of state government investment in the recycling industry. Policy designed to prioritise the use of recyclable material over virgin or imported material together with product stewardship programs will help increase our resource recovery rates as a country and reduce waste to landfill.

## MYTH BUSTING

Here at MASG we often get people telling us that they think that the yellow lidded bin is being collected, but not really being recycled. The rumour is that it is getting taken to landfill OR it is all getting taken up to Echuca by Veolia and being stockpiled and not recycled. So what is the truth of the matter?

Recyclable items collected from kerbside yellow lidded bins are taken to Veolia's Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Echuca. There, the items are sorted into various categories, e.g. paper/ cardboard, steel and aluminium cans, glass and plastic. These are then passed onto reprocessors or recycling companies who will recycle it into new products.

One of the current issues for the waste management industry is finding third party processors that can recycle all the material. Due to the difficulty and costs involved in ensuring particular types of material are recycled, on occasion, MRF operators do unfortunately make the decision to send

some of this material to landfill.

Mount Alexander Shire Council lists what can and can't go the yellow-lidded kerbside recycling bins on their website (See the link the the bottom of this page) As things change, this list is updated.

Check out our page next month for a comprehensive list of what can and can't be put into our yellow lidded bins. In upcoming months we will also let you know exactly what happens to the various streams of recycling as they go from us, to Veolia, to another company and finally gets turned into a product that can be used again.

Future Myth Busting topics will include things like: 'Contamination - what if there is contamination in a kerbside bin, does that mean the whole truck load is taken to landfill?' or 'Putting your recyclables in plastic bags - good or bad?'

**What rumours have you heard about recycling that you want to find out whether it is true? Contact us and let us know.**

### What do you wonder about with recycling?

Can we answer it for you here next month?

## BEYOND RECYCLING

### Zero Waste Tips

We know that recycling is better than just chucking stuff in the bin. But recycling still requires energy, often releases fumes and often is not 100% efficient, so there is still waste at the end of the process. The best option is to not create waste at all.

Zero Waste living is very challenging in our age of convenience, packaged products and one stop shop habits. It also required us to think about the way we do things that are habitual - we do it on autopilot. Some of the solutions are time consuming and messy and honestly – in our busy lives, it can just seem overwhelming and too hard.

However, if you can pick just one thing a month and incorporate that thing into your life – by the end of the year you will have 12 new zero waste habits!

### Try this zero waste technique this month: BAR SOAP

Use a bar of soap instead of pump bottle. We all need to use soap, which has been made especially clear this last year of the pandemic. Many people use plastic bottles of soap and a pump dispenser. You could eliminate the plastic packaging required for this by using a good old fashioned bar of soap instead.

You can also get bar shampoo and conditioner, bar deodorant etc. all with no plastic packaging, they come in compostable cardboard or none at all.

There are many shops in our shire that supply bars of soap without plastic packaging around them. Go to Drummond Body Care, Green Goes the Grocer, gift shops and even the IGAs have some brands of soap in cardboard boxes.

**Top tip:** make sure your soap can dry out between uses or it will get slimy and soft. There are many products to help with this, but you could also simply put a stone, shell or some other water proof item under the bar of soap so that the water can drain away and the soap can dry out between uses.



### What's your best zero waste tip? We'd love to share it here next month

We really want to hear from you! What is your zero waste tip? What do you want us to fact check for you about recycling? What do you wish you understood better about recycling processes? What good news story do you know about in our shire?

Contact us at [info@masg.org.au](mailto:info@masg.org.au)

Find out more about our shire's recycling at:

[www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Recycling\\_and\\_waste\\_guide](http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Recycling_and_waste_guide)

Working with our community for zero net emissions by 2030

[www.masg.org.au](http://www.masg.org.au)

