



Media Release

For immediate release

The missing piece of the recycling puzzle
Get the whole story this National Recycling Week

As Australia's population and waste levels continue to rise, recycling matters now more than ever. This year Planet Ark's National Recycling Week (13 – 19 November) highlights why recycling is only part of the battle. To help win the War on Waste consumers and businesses need to properly close the recycling loop by purchasing products that contain recycled content.

In the 20 years to 2015, Australia's population increased by 28% and waste levels grew by 170%ⁱ. The good news is that recycling is growing at an even faster rate than waste. What happens to those materials once they have been recycled and how everyone plays a part in the process is a key focus of this year's National Recycling Week campaign.

Currently the Australian manufacturing economy is predominantly linear, which can be summarised as 'take, make, use and dispose'. This is not sustainable. A circular economy on the other hand, replaces 'dispose' with 'recycle, reuse and repurpose' and keeps important materials from being wasted in landfill.

"Since the introduction of kerbside recycling in the 80s and 90s Australians have really embraced recycling. But to truly close the recycling loop, and keep valuable resources like plastic, metal and paper in circulation and out of landfills, we need to buy back the products that have been made from our recycling," says Ryan Collins, Planet Ark's Recycling Programs Manager.

New researchⁱⁱ from Planet Ark's new guide ***What Goes Around: Why Buying Recycled Matters*** shows 88% of Australians already purchase products that contain recycled materials, and 70% said they would be more likely to purchase products and / or packaging if they contained recycled materials. Most Australians also have high awareness of some products that can be made with recycled materials including office paper (83%), toilet tissue (75%) and paper towels (78%).

However, the new research also shows there is less awareness about other products that can be made using recycled materials, such as road surfaces, printer cartridges, paving and carpet underlay.

"We're actually surrounded by products made from our recycling, and people may be surprised by some of the recycled products out there, like wallets and purses made from tyre inner tubes; surfboard fins made from ocean plastic; eye glasses made from milk bottle lids; fencing made from printer cartridges; as well as shampoo bottles and shopping bags made from recycled PET plastic and even pet litter made from recycled paper. Also, inspiring discoveries from research and development projects are finding more and more ways to utilise waste, so the list of products made from recycled materials will continue to grow," Collins says.

Some of those innovations include using the unique qualities of problem waste, like tyres, to create synthetic hockey or soccer pitches, or even green steel, which reduces electricity consumption and delivers productivity improvements. Other inspiring stories include research into new uses for glass, which can be used in road bases and construction.





“When consumers and businesses purchase products that are made from recycled materials, they create a demand for recycling, which supports Australian industry, allows new recycled manufacturing opportunities to flourish and creates jobs. As well as being good for the environment, the financial benefits of this closed loop cycle are significant. It’s estimated that by 2025 the circular economy in Australia could be worth \$26 billion,” Collins says.

High consumer support for products that contain recycled content will grow that market and strengthen the circular economy in Australia. To make it easier for consumers and businesses to buy recycled, Planet Ark has created a handy **online directory** to raise awareness that these products are available and plentiful.

This year Planet Ark is also launching a new annual event. **Buy It Back Day** (Sat 18 Nov) encourages the community to celebrate National Recycling Week through mindful purchasing by buying something secondhand or buying a product made from recycled materials. Shoppers are invited to share their purchase on social media with a photo and hashtags #BuyItBack and #NationalRecyclingWeek.

Schools can take the **Naturale Schools Recycle Right Challenge** with free, fun and interactive teaching resources. A school from each state and territory will win a **Replas** outdoor seat made from recycled soft plastics worth \$439, with three runners-up receiving an **eWood** Garden Bed as part of the schools competition.

From 30 October everyone can test their waste knowledge with the online **Recycle Right Quiz**. All participants go into the draw to win one of ten Plastic Free Starter Kits worth \$84 donated by **Biome**, which includes a glass KeepCup, a five pack of Onya bags, a stainless steel straw, plus more.

Join the community’s War on Waste and celebrate National Recycling Week! For more information on any of the above visit www.recyclingweek.planetark.org or call the hotline 1300 733 712.

National Recycling Week Events:

The **Schools Recycle Right Challenge** (2 Oct – 17 Nov), the **Friday File Fling** (Fri 17 Nov), **Buy It Back Day** (Sat 18 Nov) and the **Big Aussie Swap** (13 – 19 Nov).

Ambassadors:

This year Planet Ark also welcomes **Professor Veena Sahajwalla** (Director SMaRT Centre, UNSW), **Laura Wells** (model, marine biologist, sustainable fashion advocate), **James Treble** (interior designer and upcycling guru), **Costa Georgiadis** (ABC Gardening Australia) and **Magdalena Roze** (author, meteorologist and food waste warrior) as ambassadors for National Recycling Week.

Sponsors:

National Recycling Week 2017 is kindly supported by Major Sponsor **Naturale Tissue Products**, Associate Sponsors **Bingo Industries** and ‘**Cartridges 4 Planet Ark**’, Supporting Sponsors **MobileMuster**, **Planet Ark 100% Australian Recycled Paper (Australian Paper)**, **Tetra Pak** and **Tyre Stewardship Australia** and Prize Partners **Biome**, **eWood Gardens** and **Replas**.

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ⁱ MRA Consulting Group 2016, 'State of Waste 2016 – current and future Australian trends'

https://blog.mraconsulting.com.au/2016/04/20/state-of-waste-2016-current-and-future-australian-trends/#_edn2

ⁱⁱ *What Goes Around: Why Buying Recycled Matters*. A Guide for Households, Businesses and Councils, October 2017

<http://recyclingweek.planetark.org/media/research.cfm>

