

# Glass Recycling

At more than 2,500 year old, glass bottles are one of the oldest forms of packaging. Glass containers can be re-used many times and recycled indefinitely.

The three main ingredients in glass are sand, soda ash and limestone. In Australia, most glass produced contains a substantial proportion of recycled glass. There are significant environmental and economic benefits from recycling glass, therefore it is important to recycle glass correctly to avoid contamination.

## Reducing glass waste

Minimising your use of any product or packaging reduces your impact on the environment by reducing the energy, water and raw materials that are consumed in its production and transportation. In order to minimise your glass use, buy in bulk and/or take glass jars to stores be refilled (services available at health food stores and co-op.s). Use 'on tap' options for beverages when appropriate, rather than packaged versions. For other glass bottles and jars, re-use them as containers in the kitchen, house and shed, or donate them to a community craft group or school.

## Why recycle glass?

Producing glass from recycled glass rather than raw materials uses 75% less energy. This is largely due to the much lower production temperature, which conserves energy and oil, and extends the life of the furnace. The energy saved by recycling a single bottle could light a 15-watt low energy light bulb for 24 hours.<sup>1</sup>

Recycling glass therefore results in a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Australian glass bottles have generally 40 – 70% recycled content, which means that your bottles and jars go directly into the manufacture of new bottles and jars at an energy saving. For every tonne of glass recycled via kerbside recycling, there is a saving of 560 kg carbon dioxide.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, using recycled glass conserves more than 1.1 tonnes of raw materials per tonne.



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## Factsheet



How do you recycle  
computers, corks,  
cartridges and cans?

For information on  
council services and  
drop-off locations in  
your area...  
visit



RecyclingNearYou  
.com.au

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1 300 733 712

## How to recycle glass

It is important to recycle glass correctly to maintain the environmental and economic effectiveness of this process by avoiding contamination. Just five grams of heat-treated glass can contaminate one tonne of recyclable bottle and jar glass.

**Bottle and Jar Glass:** All glass jars and glass bottles are recyclable. This includes beer, wine, soft drink and sauce bottles, as well as all colours of glass - clear, green and amber. Most councils provide glass recycling as part of their regular kerbside collections and/or have glass drop-off facilities. For further details on your council services or alternative drop-off locations visit [RecyclingNearYou.com.au](http://RecyclingNearYou.com.au)

**All Other Glass:** Heat-treated glass including drinkware, ceramics, plate glass (window panes), oven-proof glass and pyrex cannot be recycled via your council recycling services. The melting temperature of heat-treated glass is higher than that of bottle and jar glass. When this is mixed with bottle and jar recycling it can prevent the molten glass extruding properly or it can make the new bottles too brittle to use. Opaque glass, light globes and glass products containing other materials also contaminate recyclable glass. Contaminated batches of glass are sent to landfill.<sup>3</sup> Non-recyclable glass that is broken at home should be wrapped in newspaper and placed in the rubbish bin.

**Prepare glass bottles and jars for recycling:** Remove lids and caps. Plastic lids should be placed in the rubbish bin. Glass does not need to be rinsed, you can just scrape out any remaining food. If you prefer to rinse, use the dishwater rather than fresh water. Labels do not need to be removed, although paper labels can be recycled if you wish to remove these.

## What happens to the glass?

After collection, glass bottles and jars are finely crushed. The majority is melted in a furnace, usually with additional raw materials, to produce glass containers. Glass is infinitely recyclable in this manner. Recycled glass is also used as building aggregate, in water filtration and for building materials.

## More information

[Keep South Australia Beautiful](#)  
[Sustainability Victoria<sup>1</sup>](#)  
[NSW Government<sup>2</sup>](#)  
[Visy<sup>3</sup>](#)



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