CREATING A CLEAN & GREEN BRISBANE

Brisbane’s Best Recycling Guide for Households

Dedicated to a better Brisbane
Brisbane City Council is committed to making Brisbane a cleaner and greener place to live. To do this, we need your help to reduce waste disposed of to landfill and increase household recycling.

Recycling is easy and benefits our environment.

**Recycling**

- reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- saves energy and water
- conserves non-renewable resources for future generations
- reduces reliance on landfills
- creates more job opportunities than landfill disposal
- makes caring for the environment easy.

In 2017-18 Council collected 90,000 tonnes of paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and metal from Brisbane households through the kerbside recycling service. These materials have now been recycled and remade into all sorts of new things including packaging items, parts for toys, bikes, cars and even trains.

Although this is a fantastic effort, we can still do better and further reduce the amount of material being sent to landfill each year.

Together, we’ll get recycling sorted.

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What are we throwing away?

This picture shows what the average Brisbane household puts in their rubbish bin each week, as identified in Council’s waste characterisation survey.

Everything put in your household rubbish bin is sent to landfill.

More than 17% of the bin contains items that could have been put in the household recycling bin.

About 47% of the bin contains garden waste and/or kitchen scraps that could have been put in a compost bin or worm farm.

More than 64% of the contents in your household rubbish bin could have been kept out of landfill.

You can help reduce what is sent to landfill by finding out more about what can be recycled, and by putting the right items in the right bin.
If you take a look around your house, you’ll find recyclables in every room. The kitchen, laundry, bathroom and even the garage provide lots of recycling opportunities for the keen recycler.
Place items made from **paper, cardboard, firm plastic, metal (aluminium and steel)** and **glass** in your recycling bin at home.

What’s the easiest way to tell if something is recyclable?

If you’re unsure whether an item may be recycled, ask yourself “What is it made from?” If the answer is paper, cardboard, firm plastic, metal (aluminium and steel), or glass you can be confident it can be recycled. Even if it does not have the recycling symbol it can still be put in your recycling bin at home.

**In the bathroom**

**Recycle:**
- toilet rolls
- shampoo, conditioner and body wash containers
- hair gel tubs
- aerosol cans (air fresheners, deodorants, hair sprays)
- glass bottles (aftershave, perfumes and vitamins)
- empty cleaning product bottles.
In the garage
Recycle:
• newspapers
• boxes
• empty aerosols and packaging materials
• all plastic containers and paint tins (empty and dry).

Containers or tins still containing paint, oil or chemicals can be disposed of at one of Council resource recovery centres. See page 22 for details.

In the laundry
Recycle:
• washing detergent boxes
• all plastic containers (washing liquid, fabric softener, stain remover and cleaning products).
What can be put in your recycling bin?

Paper

Most types of paper can be recycled with the exception of a few items which are listed below.

- Newspaper, junk mail, brochures, office paper, gift wrapping paper, used note books, packaging paper, glossy paper and magazines, envelopes (including window envelopes), phone books, greeting cards, coloured paper, paper bags and scrap paper.

- Padded envelopes, photographs, thermal fax paper, wax-coated paper, tissues, toilet paper, baking paper and nappies.

Why can’t we recycle tissues or nappies?

Not only is it unhygienic for items containing bodily fluids to be processed alongside other recyclables, the paper fibres in these items are too short to recycle making it too difficult to recover any worthwhile material.
Cardboard

✅ Cardboard boxes, milk/juice cartons (e.g. long-life milk and fruit juice cartons/boxes), egg cartons, toy boxes, pizza and cereal boxes, detergent boxes, tissue boxes and cardboard coffee cups.

❌ Wax-coated cardboard boxes e.g. fruit boxes.

❓ Why can’t a wax-coated cardboard box be recycled?
The wax covering the box makes it too difficult to recover paper fibres.
Plastic items are sorted using an optical sorting machine which groups similar plastic types together and detects and removes non-recyclable plastics.

All firm and flexible plastic containers such as soft drink bottles, takeaway containers, margarine containers, milk and juice bottles, yoghurt tubs, biscuit and sushi trays, detergent and shampoo bottles, and disposable plates and cups.

All soft plastics such as plastic bags, plastic film or cling wrap, chip packets, toothpaste tubes, bubble wrap, styrofoam and polystyrene products*, straws and disposable nappies. Hard plastics that are not containers such as toys or toothbrushes cannot be recycled.

Why can’t we recycle soft plastics?

While plastic bags and other soft plastic packaging is sometimes made from recyclable content, their light-weight nature often results in them getting caught around moving machine parts, causing machines to jam. You can dispose of soft plastics including bubble wrap in your general waste bin, or return them to the major supermarkets where they are collected and recycled using specialist technology.

* Polystyrene products are accepted at Council’s resource recovery centres. See page 22 for details.
## Metal (aluminium and steel)

| :green_check: | All aluminium and steel packaging can be recycled including aerosol cans, paint tins (empty and dry), aluminium foil and pie trays. |
| :green_check: | Vegetable and food cans, pet food cans, soft drink cans, pie trays, aerosol cans, aluminium foil and paint tins (empty and dry). |
| :red_x: | Batteries, gas bottles, wire, scrap iron or tin, cutlery and whitegoods. |

### What should I do with other metal items that cannot be recycled through the household recycling bin?

You can dispose of other household items including batteries, gas bottles, scrap metal or whitegoods at one of Council’s resource recovery centres. See page 22 for details.
## Glass

Only glass used for packaging (e.g. bottles and jars) is collected for recycling through the household recycling bin. Other glass items are manufactured differently which makes them more prone to shattering and less suitable for recycling.

| ✓ | All clear, green and brown bottles and jars, including jam jars, food jars, sauce bottles, beverage bottles, perfume and vitamin bottles. |
|✗ | Drinking glasses, ceramics, window glass, light bulbs, mirror or window glass, heat-proof glass and cookware such as Pyrex. |

### Why can’t I recycle these items?

The glass used for bottles and jars is heavy duty and durable, while other glass types are designed for specific uses making them more fragile, transparent or heat resistant. When mixed with recyclable glass, other glass types weaken the new glass products. Glass not suitable for recycling is best to be thrown in your general waste bin.
Upgrade the size of your recycling bin

Is your recycling bin full or overflowing by collection day on a regular basis? If you are a Brisbane property owner, you can upgrade the size of your recycling bin for a one-off $30 establishment fee. Tenants should talk to their property owner or agent.

These larger recycling bins have been ergonomically designed for easy use and provide an additional 100 litres capacity for your household recycling.

Don’t let good recycling go to waste. Upgrade your recycling bin today. Visit brisbane.qld.gov.au or call Council on 3403 8888.
Free for kids!

Get the kids involved in recycling and worm farming at home! Download Lunchtime Legends and Worm World free from the App Store.

**Lunchtime Legends**

It’s lunchtime and the race is on to recycle! Sort the falling rubbish into the two school bins, and beat the clock and your friends to become Brisbane’s best recycler. Once you’ve mastered lunchtime recycling, take your knowledge home and become the king of recycling. But watch out for the possums who will try to raid your bins!

**Worm World**

Meet with nature’s cutest recyclers and take charge of your very own worm farm. They’re sensitive little creatures, so keep your worm farm healthy! Watch out for the rats and other nasties that will invade and wreak havoc in your worm farm.

This is a great way for children to learn about worm farms and organic recycling.

Worm World and Lunchtime Legends are also available on brisbane.qld.gov.au
Identify recyclable items around the house. It’s easy if you remember that if it is made from paper, cardboard, firm flexible plastic, metal (aluminium and steel) or glass, it can be put in your recycling bin at home.

Recycling symbols may not always be right. Remember if it’s made from the five materials listed above, it can go into your recycling bin. Other things, like plastic bags, can only be recycled through other dedicated recycling services. For example, plastic bags can be recycled via some supermarkets and should not be put in your recycling bin at home.

Aerosol cans are recyclable. You can safely dispose of all empty aerosol cans and containers that previously held household chemicals in your recycling bin.

Trust the process. Do your best to decide if an item can be recycled, but trust the technology at the recycling facility to remove non-recyclables if you get it wrong.

Use different bins to collect more. Make collecting your recyclables at home easier by placing a bin for recyclables in your kitchen, bathroom and laundry. Sorting your recyclables at the point of disposal will help you to recycle more.
Containers do not need to be rinsed before being placed in your recycling bin. Although rinsing does reduce bin odours, not doing this will not ruin the whole load of recycling.

**Do not put your recyclables in plastic bags.** Instead place the items loose in your recycling bin. Plastic bags cannot be opened at the recycling facility for safety reasons, and all the goods inside are sent to landfill.

**Don’t forget that every little bit counts.** Even making the effort to recycle one or two extra items each week, such as the junk mail from the letterbox or the empty air freshener can from the bathroom, helps to conserve precious resources from going to landfill.

**Remove the lids from containers and bottles** before you place the bottles in the recycling bin and lids in the rubbish bin.

**Only glass jars and bottles are suitable for recycling.** Drinking glasses, ceramics and heat-proof glass (e.g. Pyrex) melt at a different temperature and cannot be recycled. Put these items in your rubbish bin at home.
Council provides recycling bins to residents for the recycling of paper, cardboard, firm plastic, metal (aluminium and steel) and glass packaging materials.

There are many other items that can be recycled from our homes, but these should not be placed in your recycling bin. These items include computers, televisions, white goods, batteries, light bulbs and lots more. See page 22 for other recycling options.

**Items that SHOULD NOT be placed in your recycling bin include:**

- plastic bags
- food waste
- garden waste
- disposable nappies
- clothes.

**Plastic bags**

Soft plastics, such as plastic bags, garbage bags and cling wrap are lightweight and frequently jam the sorting machines by becoming tangled around rotating machinery parts. Soft plastics can be recycled through specialised collection services located at major supermarkets and should not go in your household recycling bin.

Place your recyclables in your recycling bin loose rather than putting them in plastic bags.
**Food waste**

Empty the contents of your containers in your general bin or worm farm. Containers can have a small amount of residue and will not ruin the whole recycling load. Rinsing is not required, although it helps to reduce odour in your recycling bin.

**Other contaminants**

You can safely dispose of containers that previously held household chemicals in your recycling bin, as long as they are empty and dry.

Used oil containers, paint tins, car batteries and gas bottles are not suitable for your recycling bin. Drop these off at one of Council’s resource recovery centres. See page 20 for details.

Long items can also be a hazard and interrupt processing. Hoses, wires and hard plastic strapping used in packaging should be disposed off on one of Council’s free hazardous waste drop-off days.

Other hazardous waste items, such as pool chemicals, pesticides, and acids can be safely disposed of on one of Council’s free hazardous waste drop-off days. For more information visit brisbane.qld.gov.au or phone Council on 3403 8888.
What happens to my recycling?

Recycling bin

Collection truck

Products made from recycled material

Recycling bales

Manual sorting

Mechanical sorting
Your recycling is collected from the kerb by a dedicated recycling truck and travels to the recycling facility. Here it passes through a series of manual and mechanical sorting processes.

At the beginning of the sorting process, workers attempt to manually remove potentially harmful items such as gas bottles, or items that are not suitable for recycling such as disposable nappies, garden waste, plastic bags or electronics.

The items then travel through several machines that sort the items by size and material type. By the end of the journey, the items have been grouped by material type and are put into bales, ready for sale and reprocessing.

This is very different from what happens to the waste in your rubbish bin, which goes to landfill. After your rubbish bin is collected, it is taken to a Council facility to be crushed and compacted as much as possible. Compacting materials helps to reduce the size of the waste and prolong the space and life of the landfill. After the rubbish has been compacted, it is loaded into large semi-trailers and taken to the landfill site for disposal.
Recycling at Council’s resource recovery centres is now free and easier than ever before.

Council has upgraded the sites to provide free recycling for vehicles with a Combined Gross Vehicle Mass (CGVM) under 4.5 tonnes.

Green waste and general waste is still accepted and will attract the advertised disposal fees, or you can use Council’s vouchers for household waste. When you arrive, please let the staff know what type of material you wish to unload.

The centres are open from 6.30am to 5.45pm every day of the year, including public holidays.

* For a list of acceptable items, please see page 22.
Recycling at Council’s resource recovery centres

Staying safe

When visiting a resource recovery centre remember to dress appropriately to ensure that you stay safe. Fully enclosed shoes, long pants, protective glasses (e.g. sunglasses), and protective gloves are recommended. Children under 12 and family pets are to remain in the vehicle at all times. If you have a heavy load, bring a friend or family member to help you unload it. Council resource recovery centres are non-smoking sites.

Nudgee Resource Recovery Centre
1372 Nudgee Road, Nudgee

Willawong Resource Recovery Centre
360 Sherbrooke Road, Willawong

Chandler Resource Recovery Centre
728 Tilley Road, Chandler

Ferny Grove Resource Recovery Centre
101 Upper Kedron Road, Ferny Grove
Council’s resource recovery centres accept a wide range of recyclable items free of charge.

**Recycling at Council’s resource recovery centres**

Aluminium cans
Whitegoods and appliances
Cardboard and paper
Mobile phones
e-waste

Fluorescent lighting tubes and bulbs
Furniture and household items in reusable condition
Plastic and glass bottles
Clean polystyrene
Empty gas bottles (up to 9kg)

Metals (both ferrous and non-ferrous)
Used engine oil* (maximum 100 litres per customer per visit)

Paints, water based and oil based* (maximum 100 litres per customer per visit)
Car batteries

Household batteries

Normal fees apply for disposal of green waste or use your waste vouchers.
* The limit for each product applies to residents and commercial operators.
Recycling at Council’s resource recovery centres

Tip shop donations

Residents can donate items in reusable condition for free at any of the four Council resource recovery centres. Items accepted include household furniture, books, toys, sporting equipment and bric-a-brac in clean, working condition.

Council’s two tip shops are open every weekend. They sell quality used, recycled and second-hand products salvaged from landfill. The Endeavour Foundation operate both tip shops.

Clothing can be donated to either tip shops or charity clothing bins at resource recovery centres.

Find your nearest Council tip shop

Open weekends only 8am to 4pm

📍 Southside Tip Shop
46 Colebard Street West, Acacia Ridge

📍 Northside Tip Shop
27A Prosperity Place, Geebung
Recycling organics

Composting food and garden waste

Did you know that 47% of what goes to landfill is organic waste from our kitchens and gardens?

Composting and worm farming is an inexpensive, natural process that transforms your kitchen and garden waste into a nutrient-rich fertiliser or mulch for your garden. It’s easy to make and use.

Everybody can compost no matter how limited your outdoor space might be. Compost bins are perfect for even the smallest of backyards, while worm farms fit perfectly on patios or in garages.

Worm farms can recycle:

✓ fruit scraps (except for citrus such as oranges, mandarins, lemons and limes)
✓ vegetable scraps (except for onions, leeks, garlic and chillies)
✓ tea bags and coffee grounds
✓ egg shells.

Establishing a worm farm is a great family activity that your children will love. Get the kids involved by playing Worm World. See page 13 for details.
Compost bins can recycle:

- fruit and vegetable scraps (even onions and citrus)
- tea bags and coffee grounds
- egg shells
- grass clippings and straw
- other garden waste, including prunings and shrubs
- manure from herbivores e.g. cows, horses and sheep (no cat or dog manure)
- pet hair
- vacuum cleaner contents
- wood ash and untreated sawdust.

Do you need some help starting out?
Council runs free composting workshops across Brisbane that teach residents how to compost using a bin or worm farm. For more information, call Council on 3403 8888 or visit brisbane.qld.gov.au
Biodegradable products

Biodegradable and compostable packaging, including bamboo plates and cutlery, and corn starch bags, don’t belong in your recycling bin. Reuse these biodegradable products when you can and by checking with the product supplier about the best disposal methods.

Organic waste such as lawn clippings and fruit and vegetable scraps are biodegradable and compostable. Although they are not suitable for your recycling bin, there are other ways to recycle these.

Garden trimmings and lawn clippings can go in your green waste bin (see pages 28-29), composted at home (see pages 24-25), or be taken to one of Council’s resource recovery centres for mulching (see pages 20-21).

Fruit and vegetable scraps can be composted using a worm farm or compost bin at home (see page 24-25) or at a community composting hub located at community gardens across Brisbane.
Community composting hubs

Council has partnered with selected community gardens around Brisbane to help residents turn kitchen scraps into nutrients for the soil. Registered participants are eligible to collect a free kitchen caddy to transport their kitchen fruit and vegetable waste to their local community composting hub.

To find your local community composting hub and register, visit brisbane.qld.gov.au or phone 3403 8888.
Green waste recycling bins

Green waste recycling bins are an easy and affordable way to recycle your garden waste.

Green waste recycling bins are collected fortnightly from your home and the green waste is taken to a green waste recycling facility where it is processed into compost and mulch.

Recycling your lawn clippings, palm fronds, prunings and leaves saves valuable organic resources from going to landfill while helping to create a more sustainable, green and clean city.

If you have large volumes of green waste that won’t fit in a 240-litre wheelie bin, consider using one of Brisbane’s local businesses that operate a garden bag collection service. Visit gardenbaggrou.com.au for more information.

A green waste bin is available for a one-off $30 establishment fee, and a small quarterly fee payable on your rates if you are the property owner. Tenants should talk to their property owner or agent.
To order your new green waste recycling bin visit brisbane.qld.gov.au or call Council now on 3403 8888.
Business recycling
Recycling at work is now as easy as recycling at home
Let your customers know that your business cares about the environment.

Council has taken all the hard work out of recycling in the workplace with recycling bins for businesses. It’s now simple to recycle paper, cardboard, glass, metal and plastic all in one bin!

A recycling bin for your business will also:

- save you time by having all of your recycling in one bin
- reduce the clutter of bins at the back of your shop or office
- reduce the carbon footprint of your business
- reduce waste going to landfill.

Call Council on 3403 8888 or visit brisbane.qld.gov.au to place an order or for more information.
Free Council recycling app

Download the Brisbane Bin and Recycling app, available for smartphones and tablets.

This free app includes a bin collection calendar, quick guide to recycling, directions to resource recovery centres and more.

If you don’t have a smartphone or tablet you can access the bin collection calendar on Council’s website.

For more information visit brisbane.qld.gov.au or phone Council on 3403 8888.