



#RecycleRight



Frequently Asked Questions

1 What are the changes to recycling in the Northern Rivers?



Northern Rivers council's have launched a new campaign called Recycle Right, which aims to re-educate and inform our communities about some important changes to kerbside recycling. Please follow the below so that we can all recycle right.

- 1. Keep it simple:** Only recycle paper and cardboard, steel and aluminium cans, glass bottles and jars, plastic bottles and containers and Resource Recovery Collection Satchels.
- 2. Keep out soft plastics:** This includes all plastic bags, even if they have a recycling symbol, are degradable or compostable, and other soft plastics including cling wrap, chip packets, bread bags etc.
- 3. Keep out meat and biscuit trays**
- 4. Keep out takeaway coffee cups**
- 5. Keep out small items:** Any items smaller than a credit card. All lids now need to be removed from bottles and anything smaller than a credit card should be put in your landfill bin.
- 6. Keep it Safe:** Keep out strapping, rope, hose, netting, wires, building materials and other hazardous materials.
- 7. Keep it Clean:** Rinse or wipe out containers.
- 8. Keep it Loose:** Don't bag or box recyclables when putting them in your kerbside bin.

2 Why are these changes being made?



In recent years, most of our recycling (paper and cardboard, plastic and metal products) was sent to China for manufacturing.

In 2017, China implemented their National Sword Policy which has placed much tighter restrictions on unsorted and contaminated (incorrect/dirty) items in recycling.

The impacts of this policy have been felt worldwide and forced significant changes in the recycling market, including reduced demand and lower commodity prices for some materials.

While we are now faced with the challenge of adapting to these changes in the market, there are also many opportunities.

We are hopeful these challenges will create support for new industry, technology and innovation within Australia, along with better recycling practices.

We all need to think about the products we purchase, how much household waste we generate and how we can avoid creating waste.

3 Why is it important that my recycling is 'safe'?



When incorrect items are placed in the recycling bin, they can reduce the capacity of our region to recycle adequately and place a strain on the sustainability of the recycling industry.

Items like hosing, netting and strapping can jam machinery. Apart from contaminating the recycling stream, they also place our Materials Recovery Facility staff at risk as they attempt to unjam machinery.

4 Why should I keep recycling? Don't these changes take us back 10 years?



We understand some of these changes might be disappointing, they are for us too. Northern Rivers councils understand this is an important community issue and we are working hard to recycle as much as possible.

We would rather have all of the items in our recycling bins recycled effectively, rather than sending them to landfill.

We understand recycling can get a bit confusing, so we've simplified the message to improve our recycling practices.

We all need to do our bit and think about our own waste generation. We can begin by being responsible for waste disposal, purchasing products that include recycled content and are recyclable, and of course avoid waste where we can.

5 Why can't I put bagged soft plastics in the recycling bin anymore?



There are a few reasons:

1. There is currently limited markets for soft plastic recycling.
2. They often come loose in the truck and get caught up in the other recycling streams, causing contamination. We need our recycling to be as clean as possible, otherwise it will be rejected by the recycling markets.
3. They get tangled in the machines, which slows or potentially stops the sorting process.

6 What can I do with my soft plastics now I can't put them in my yellow recycling bin?



Please continue to collect and recycle your soft plastics through supermarket soft plastic recycling programs such as Redcycle.

Collection bins are located at Coles and Woolworths stores in Ballina and Alstonville.

7 Why can't I recycle takeaway coffee cups anymore?



The linings in some takeaway coffee cups are plastic which makes them difficult to recycle.

Our recyclers no longer accept them in the paper and cardboard stream, and now that our recyclables need to be clean they are considered to be contaminated.

We encourage residents to use reusable coffee cups or alternatively enjoy your beverage relaxing in your favourite café using their washable cups.

8 Why can't I recycle my meat and biscuit trays anymore?



Meat and biscuit trays are made from a mixed plastic and cannot be separated for recycling.

9 Why can't I put items smaller than a credit card in the recycling bin?



Small items such as bottle and jar lids will often fall off during transportation or in the sorting process at the MRF. This can cause problems by jamming machinery.

10 Why do I have to wash containers?



Keeping recyclables clean is our main goal. Rinse out food and drink from containers before placing them in the recycling bin.

Help save water by adding empty containers to your dishwashing pile.

11 Why can't I put recyclables in a paper bag or cardboard box and put into my recycling bin?



Our MRF machinery and staff cannot easily sort recyclable items that are boxed or bagged.

Please keep items loose in your kerbside bin to keep the system working well.

12 Is my recycling going to landfill?



No. Councils in the Northern Rivers aren't sending your recycling to landfill. Our kerbside recycling continues to go to Lismore City Council's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) where it is sorted, bailed and transported to various local and international markets for recycling.

13 Can I still use my resource recovery satchel in the kerbside recycling bin?



Yes. Residents can still recycle household batteries, reading glasses, corks, CDs and DVDs, X-rays, mobile phones and accessories, small electronics (eg. cameras, iPods and calculators) and printer cartridges using their Resource Recovery satchel. Satchels are available at shire libraries, council offices and the Waste Management Centre.

14 Can I recycle all items with a recycling symbol?



No. Not every item with a recycling symbol can be recycled in the Northern Rivers. Food, drink or other containers are imported and exported around the world and there isn't a global recycling symbol.

Planet Ark has developed an Australian recycling label that you will notice on products (<https://planetark.org/recyclinglabel/>) but this is still not foolproof as different council areas can recycle different things.

The best thing you can do is to follow the #RecycleRight recycling routines and you can't go wrong!

For more information

visit the Ballina Shire Council website at www.ballina.nsw.gov.au or phone Customer Service on 1300 864 444

