

# Recycling paper and cardboard

## Did you know?

- Australians use more than 3.5 million tonnes of paper each year – if all this was made from virgin timber, it would equate to between 42-84 million trees.<sup>1</sup>
- Paper and cardboard can generally be recycled seven to eight times before the wood fibres become too short to process into new paper/cardboard.
- Gold Coast residents recycle over 23,000 tonnes of paper and cardboard each year through their household recycling bins which equates to savings of: 75,000m<sup>3</sup> landfill space, the annual electricity requirements of almost 2,000 households, and over 220 Olympic swimming pools worth of water.<sup>2</sup>
- However, Gold Coast residents are still putting 110kg recyclable paper and cardboard in their waste bins per household each year. All this ends up in landfill and is not recycled.

## What paper and cardboard products can be recycled in your household recycling bin?

- ✓ Paper products such as: newspapers, magazines, brochures, junk mail, office paper, envelopes, telephone directories and greeting cards.
- ✓ Cardboard packaging including: milk and juice cartons, corrugated cardboard boxes, cereal boxes and pizza boxes.

## What paper and cardboard products cannot be recycled in your household recycling bin?

- ✗ Waxed cardboard (e.g. fruit boxes)
- ✗ Tissues and paper towel
- ✗ Paper or cardboard that is heavily contaminated with food or grease (e.g. burger wrappers)

## How are paper and cardboard made?

- All paper and cardboard products made from virgin material are made from wood pulp taken from either hardwood or softwood trees. Woodchips are processed to wood pulp and then mixed with water to make a slurry.

- This slurry is pressed, dried and rolled to remove the water, and produces long sheets of tightly packed wood fibres which are rolled up into spools of paper.
- The paper is sent to a processing plant to be cut, coloured and moulded into various paper products, while cardboard is a number of layers of the paper bonded together.

## How are paper and cardboard recycled?

- From your recycling bin, the paper and cardboard are taken to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Carrara to be separated from other recyclables.
- Paper and cardboard are separated on special “bounce belts” that separate them from plastics and other materials.
- Once separated, they are baled and transported to processing plants and mills for reprocessing.
- New products are made by pulping the recyclable paper and cardboard with water to return it to a slurry, removing any staples, plastic, ink etc and refining it into new paper and cardboard products.
- Recycled paper and cardboard can be used to make brown packaging cardboard, newspaper, writing paper, paper bags and many other things.

## What are the benefits of recycling paper and cardboard?

- Every tonne of high quality paper (e.g. office paper) recycled saves up to 24 trees.
- Every tonne of lower quality paper (e.g. newspaper) recycled saves up to 12 trees.<sup>3</sup>
- Every tonne of paper recycled saves three cubic metres of landfill space.<sup>4</sup>
- A 1L milk carton can be recycled into five sheets of high-quality office paper.<sup>5</sup>

## Close the loop and buy recycled

- Recycling our paper and cardboard wastes into new products is only successful if there is a market for the recycled product. To become a true recycler, make sure you buy products made from recycled paper and cardboard.

## For more information, please contact Council on 07 5581 6799.

<sup>1</sup> [www.conservatree.com/learn/EnviroIssues/TreeStats.shtml](http://www.conservatree.com/learn/EnviroIssues/TreeStats.shtml)

<sup>2</sup> [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/warr/benefitrecycalcJune2008.xls](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/warr/benefitrecycalcJune2008.xls)

<sup>3</sup> [www.conservatree.com/learn/EnviroIssues/TreeStats.shtml](http://www.conservatree.com/learn/EnviroIssues/TreeStats.shtml)

<sup>4</sup> [www.wastepaperrecycling.com.au/](http://www.wastepaperrecycling.com.au/)

<sup>5</sup> [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/recycling](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/recycling)

**Make sure all paper and cardboard items are clean before placing them loosely in your household recycling bin.**