**Voices whisper that the items we carefully recycle at the kerbside go to the rubbish tip anyway. Could this be true? Not on your recycling life!**

**The materials we put out for recycling, or return to the collection depot, go to a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF or 'murf') where recyclable materials are sorted into their own types. Most are sorted by hand.**

**Individual products are baled and transported to reprocessing factories.**

## Glass

Clear, green and amber (brown) glass bottles and jars are melted down to make new glass bottles and jars, and other innovative products such as:

- abrasives for removing rust, barnacles and coatings
- sand replacement in pool filters
- sand substitute in concrete used to make footpaths, kerbing and guttering.

## Metal

From cans to cars, all steel can be recycled. Using scrap steel to make new steel is much more energy efficient than mining iron ore and then smelting it in a blast furnace. Scrap steel from tins, lids and aerosol cans are recycled into all sorts of other steel products such as white goods, car parts and also back into tin cans.

Recycled aluminium cans (like steel cans) also go through a smelting process. From there the new batches of aluminium are made into ingots and sold to manufacturers of aluminium products such as outdoor furniture, screen doors and window frames for houses, bike and car parts. A large percentage of recycled aluminium is also used to make new aluminium cans.

## Paper and cardboard

Old newspapers, magazines, advertising material (junk mail), office paper, cardboard, stationery, envelopes and telephone books are mostly recycled into cardboard packaging, newsprint and toilet paper. Some newsprint is processed into pellets for cat litter or oil absorbents and some is also made into insulation. (Small quantities of paper and cardboard can also be soaked in water, shredded and added to compost.)

## Food and drink cartons (LPB)

'Liquid Paper Board' cartons containing such things as milk, juice, custard, and stocks are a higher quality paper and can therefore be recycled into higher quality products than other paper and cardboard. They are recycled into paper such as white office grade suitable for even printers and copiers.

## Plastic

All rigid plastic containers are suitable for recycling. Plastic containers are sorted at a MRF into their own types and then baled. Sent to reprocessing factories, plastics are shredded, washed and formed into pellets or powder, ready for remaking into new plastic products.

Most products are made from single plastic types, however in some products, different types of plastic are mixed together. This technology is used in South Australia to manufacture stakes and posts, pipeline and railway line supports, garden edging and outdoor furniture.

## Different plastics, different uses

1 PET

We can now buy warm winter jackets made from 90% recycled PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic bottles which originally housed soft drink or fruit juice. PET textiles are also used for furniture fabric, melt spun continuous filament geotextiles, drainage filtration mesh and road stabilising material. A large percentage of PET bottles are also recycled back into new PET bottles.

2 HDPE

HDPE (high density polyethylene) from milk, juice, cream or household detergent containers and supermarket carry bags can now be recycled as bins for compost, garbage and recycling; detergent bottles; and low-pressure agricultural pipe and large diameter irrigation pipes.

3 PVC

PVC (polyvinyl chloride) makes up only a small proportion of packaging as bottles, blister packs and tubing. It is recycled into detergent bottles, hoses, floor coverings, and plumbing pipes and fittings.

4 LDPE

Recycled LDPE (low density polyethylene) from boutique bags, bread bags, cling, stretch and shrink wrap, is recycled into builders' film, concrete lining, garbage bags and shopping bags.

5 PP

`Ice-cream containers, margarine containers and bottles made of PP (polypropylene) are suitable for recycling as pots, crates, rubbish bins, pallets and planking. Markets are small at the moment but are being developed and expanded.

Take-away food and drink containers, food trays and various types of yoghurt and margarine containers can be recycled into EPS (expanded polystyrene) foam for hot beverages and packaging.

6 PS

7 OTHER

"Other" is either a mix of the above plastics or is any plastic that does not fall into the above categories (e.g. melamine, which is often used in plastic plates and cups).

Help the recycling process by cleaning all the left over product from containers and removing the lids. Wash food containers with your normal daily washing up so you don't waste water.

## Garden Organics

Weeds, grass cuttings, branches, flowers and leaves are all suitable for green organics collections. Garden organics and some wooden construction and demolition waste, is commercially recycled into mulch and compost. The major hindrance to commercial composting is contamination. Plastics, glass, metal or anything else non organic is a contaminant.

Apart from home gardens, compost can be used in pastures, vineyards, orchards and vegetable market gardens to improve soil structure and moisture retention, and reduce nutrient leaching and weed growth.

**Further information** contact the Council or Zero Waste SA at **www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au** or on 8204 2051.

Government of South Australia

# Where does recycled material go?

Zero Waste SA