



KAB Week Facts 2009

Waste Lives On

** Please note that many factors such as exposure to water, air, location etc. can affect these figures.*

- Aluminium cans can take between 80 - 200 years to break down
- A foam cup can take up to 50 years to decompose
- Fishing line can take up to 600 years to break down
- A glass bottle can take up to 1 million years to decompose
- A plastic bottle can take up to 450 years to break down
- A cardboard milk carton can take up to 5 years to decompose

Household Waste ⁽¹⁾

- Each Australian household produces an average 1.14 tonnes of waste per year.
- Up to 80% of what we throw away can be reused or recycled instead.
- Organic (green and food) waste comprises up to 1/3rd of the total amount of waste thrown away by households each year.
- If paper and cardboard are also added to the waste stream, then over 50% of what we throw away could have been composted instead.
- In 06/07 households generated an estimated 11.9 million tonnes of waste of which 7.3 million tonnes were disposed of in landfill and 4.6 million tonnes recycled. If current trends continue, this could reach 22.4 million tonnes in 2020.
- In 2006-07 an estimated 41.4 million tonnes of waste was generated in Australia overall, with around 49% reported as being recycled and 51% as being disposed of to landfill. If current trends continue this means around 70 million tonnes of waste will be generated each year by 2020.

Waste and greenhouse gas emissions ⁽¹⁾

- Emissions from the waste sector represents 2.6 per cent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions,
- Removing organic material from the waste stream could reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by 2%.

Mobile Phone Recycling ⁽²⁾

- Over 90% of the materials in mobile phones, batteries and accessories can be recovered and reused.
- One tonne of mobile phone circuit boards yield 60 times more gold than a tonne of gold ore
- Between 14 to 16 million old and broken mobile phones are stashed away in cupboards and drawers
- As at 31 March 2009 MobileMuster had recycled more than 582 tonnes of mobile phone components including 4.01 million handsets and batteries. This is equivalent to diverting more than 2 tonne of cadmium, 1.2 tonne of lead, 100 tonne of steel and 30 tonne of plastics from landfill for reuse.

Printer Cartridges

- Australians send 5,000 tonnes of printer cartridges to landfill per year. ⁽³⁾
- A printer cartridge thrown into landfill can take up to 450 years to decompose. ⁽⁴⁾
- Cartridge World prevents over 160 tonnes of empty printer cartridges from entering landfill every year through reuse.
- If stacked end-to-end, all of the printer cartridges used in 2008 would measure 140,000 miles. That's more than 5 ½ times around the world. ⁽⁵⁾

Recycling

- Using recycled materials for glass production saves energy and resources; each tonne of glass saves 1.1 tonnes of raw materials. ⁽⁶⁾
- Recycled glass requires approximately 40% less energy than glass made from virgin material. ⁽⁷⁾
- It takes 95% less energy to make aluminium from scrap than from virgin materials. ⁽⁷⁾
- Recycling steel requires 80% less energy than steel made from virgin material. ⁽⁷⁾
- Producing new plastic from recycled material uses only two-thirds of the energy required to manufacture plastic from virgin materials. ⁽⁷⁾
- Australians use over 3.9 billion plastic bags a year, that's over 10 million new bags being used every day. An estimated 3.7 billion bags or 20,700 tonnes of plastic are disposed of in landfill sites throughout Australia every year. ⁽⁸⁾
- It is estimated that around 50 million bags enter the Australian litter stream every year. ⁽⁸⁾