

This earthy, memorable phrase refers to the act of doing something which makes you feel personally better, but which people neither notice nor care that you've done it. I thank the people who obviously did notice Edition 1 of this paper, but due to quite a high resident-turnover in the intervening 20 months I thought the paper itself deserved to be recycled. It's aim is still to encourage improved recycling of what we too often just regard as 'waste'. Clive Rumney, #15. July 2015.

Recycling and Waste Recovery.

Firstly an explanation of why, in spite of our best intentions, some material we intend to send for recycling can still end-up as landfill. In our context, the reasons for this include how we 'package' our recyclable waste &/or whether our skips are so contaminated with non-recyclable stuff that it become too expensive to process it. The Waste Recovery Centres in Melbourne are commercial operations, so the harsh economic reality is that if it costs \$1 to recover 95 cents worth of usable resources – it won't happen.

The processes used to recover the different types of resources from the waste that we discard are ingenious, but not fool-proof. The waste is fed along a system of conveyor belts and through large rotating cylinders with air vents along the sides. Using a combination of magnets, strong air-blowers, electro-magnetic fields (used, surprisingly, for aluminium), cleverly positioned chutes and gravity, the different forms of waste are sorted to be sold for re-use. The unsalvageable becomes land-fill.

Quite apart from it not being economically viable for the waste recovery centres to unpack our 'stuff', some workers have suffered worrying needle-stick injuries when opening plastic bags full of recyclables. Therefore OH&S rules now say they are **not** to open these bags. So, the material you've thoughtfully put aside for recycling could still go to landfill if it is packed in plastic bags. The same may be true of bottles and cans in cardboard boxes, and unwanted mail still in it's plastic postal packaging.

So, things we can do to improve recycling include:

- Please **empty** your 'For Recycling' bin-bags into the blue skips – don't put the whole bag in. Then put the empty bin-bag into a green 'Rubbish' skip, because
- Plastic bags themselves are, unfortunately, not recycled. The reason is practical – the light plastic bags get stuck in the air-vents of the rotating cylinders, creating blockages and costly hold-ups. However, they can be left at the Council Waste Recovery Centre (see below). BUT ... the OC C'tee might be persuaded to buy a wheelie-bin just for plastic bags to be collected and recycled if there is sufficient demand for that service. **Is there?** Please let the C'tee know.
- Plastic containers are mostly made of a plastic which can be recycled. Look for a numbered triangular code-symbol on the base, if the number is between 1 and 7 then it's recyclable.
- Food containers, be they plastic, glass or cardboard, don't need to be washed out, but if they contain more than a little food residue they may be deemed "unsuitable for processing" and be sent for landfill. Liquid-paperboard such as milk and juice containers can be recycled.
- **Polystyrene is NOT recyclable when it's mixed with other waste**, because it requires specialist treatment and must be collected separately, or be left (in our case) at the Council depot in Clifton Hill (see below for details). Please either do the latter or put it into the green 'Rubbish' skips. When cardboard boxes containing polystyrene are put into 'Recycle' skips that may also result in both the box and the polystyrene becoming landfill.
- Aluminium is the most valuable of all recyclable materials, so please recycle it whenever you can & in any form, be it cans, cookware, alfoil, handles, shelf brackets, medication wrappers etc.

Few could deny that our planet's resources should be more carefully managed. Being less wasteful and making better use of existing resources, by recycling them as well and as often as we can, is important. A step we can all take towards that aim is being more aware of what can be recycled and putting it into blue skips so it can be more efficiently sorted for re-use.

More Specifically for BYFAS:

The City of Yarra Waste Recovery Centre is on Roseneath Street, Clifton Hill, just 800 metres up our street under the freeway and to the immediate right. The sign on their gate (below) says what can, and can't, be left there for recycling. As you can see, this comprehensive list could divert quite a lot of what we now put into general waste to more productive usage. There are labelled bins close-by to put contributions into.



Another sign says what is not accepted, i.e. General waste, Chemicals, Paint, Building materials, Whitegoods*, Mattresses, Personal goods*, Tyres, Green waste, Gas bottles & Furniture*.

Another positive way to recycle our unwanted 'stuff' is at the **Salvation Army depot** at the river end of Gipps street, less than 1km away. They willingly accept donations of a wide range of goods, including the three asterisked items above – as long as they are in usable, saleable condition. They also have a very large skip for recyclable metals, which is then on-sold to help finance the good social work the Salvo's do.

Hard Waste: Yarra Council runs a Hard Waste collection service. Phone them on 9205 5190 to make a booking. They can take up to 3 m³ per truck-load, so combining with a neighbour could have a big collective impact on clearing clutter from our cages & car spaces.

A Specific UB Request: It costs the OC about \$1,000 a month for our waste to be taken away, a cost which will only ever go northwards. It will help contain that cost if more effective use is made of the blue skips by not filling them with uncrushed boxes. [*Why does the title to this paper come to mind again?*]. When larger boxes are flattened, please try to stand them upright if possible. A layer of flat boxes on top can mean the space below can't be filled by other waste. This contributes to our skips not being effectively used, and to more waste not being recycled.

Thank you Folks.

For More Information try ... <http://recyclingnearyou.com.au/council/YarraVIC>
<http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/Services/Waste-Services/A-Z-Waste-Guide/>