



FERROUS METALS

Ferrous metals are metals containing a substantial amount of iron such as steel and stainless steel. They account for approximately 1-5% of household waste, mostly in the form of containers (such as steel cans) or domestic appliances.

The production of ferrous materials relies on ore mining and is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions due to its large-scale energy use (ABS). Luckily, ferrous metals have a relatively high value and therefore recycling recovery rates are also high. In order to collect the metals for recycling, specialised magnets can be dragged above waste to pick up ferrous materials. There are many scrap metal mer-

chants who buy large quantities of iron and steel for remanufacturing as well.

Steel mills using scrap iron and steel in place of virgin ore to produce new products create a much smaller environmental impact. For every tonne of remanufactured steel, 1 115kg of iron ore, 625kg of coal and 53kg of limestone are saved (Smorgon Steel).

References:

Australian Bureau of Statistics website available at <http://www.abs.gov.au>
Smorgon Steel, available at <http://www.smorgonsteel.com.au/recycling/>

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Ensure all your cans are recycled. If you are not sure if they are recyclable in your area, contact your local council.
- If you have larger ferrous metals you wish to get rid of, search the local Yellow Pages for scrap metal merchants in your area.

MORE INFORMATION

- www.npi.gov.au/handbooks/approved_handbooks/pubs/fironste.pdf - National Pollutions Inventory handbook on iron and steel production
- www.bluescopesteel.com provides information on the production and recycling of steel
- www.cleanup.com.au/PDF/au/cua-steel-and-aluminium-recycling-fact-sheet.pdf. Fact sheet about aluminium and steel can recycling and environmental impacts.
- www.cleanup.com.au/PDF/au/fact-sheet-scrap-metal.pdf. Clean Up Australia's fact sheet on scrap metal and recycling.