GLASS RECYCLING

Clear, green or brown glass bottles and jars that are commonly used as food and drink containers can be recycled. Many other glass-like items can not be recycled. Things such as window glass, mirrors, drinking glasses, crockery and *Pyrex* dishes look and feel like glass, but they are not made with the same materials as glass bottles and jars. They cannot be melted down and mixed with pure glass containers, as these other materials can severely damage furnaces and other machinery in glass factories, and their impurity can result in a whole batch of glass being sent to landfill.

Most glass manufactured in Australia does not use 100% raw materials (sand, soda ash and limestone), but has a percentage of recycled content. Glass can be recycled time and again. Glass can be recycled into insulation, glass bottles and jars, paving bricks, concrete, glasphalt road fill and filter materials.

The following types of glass can not be recycled: ceramic plates, cups and crockery; heat-treated glass (eg. *Pyrex, Corning Ware* or *Vision Ware*); light globes, mirror and window glass; white and coloured opaque bottles and laboratory and medical glass. Some types of glass (eg. car windscreen and window glass) are recycled into road beds and abrasives, but they must not be mixed with glass jars and bottles. These materials can not be recycled for the following reasons:

- The recycled materials must be of high quality
- There are many types of glass, each manufactured differently. Because of this we can't mix them when recycling and it is difficult and expensive to sort them– especially when broken.
- Glass has strict quality requirements because it is used for food storage - these can only be met if the glass is uncontaminated.

There are many environmental benefits linked to recycling glass. They include:

- Reduced use of natural resources – cullett (used glass containers), properly reprocessed with contaminants removed is a good substitute for virgin materials. Each tonne of cullett saves 1.1 tonnes of raw materials.
- The use of cullett in glass production may save energy, but the savings depend on the percentage of cullett used.
- The average percentage of cullett used in each batch of glass varies depending on its availability. Currently, in Australia, the average usage exceeds 40%,although sometimes 80% has been achieved.
- Reduced emissions – the use of cullett in glass production means emissions are reduced because the used glass has already been through the fusion process and is close to its final form
- Recycling glass means less waste to landfill.

WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Check with your local council about recycling glass in your area.
2. Remove lids or caps and either reuse or put in garbage
3. Rinse bottles and jars

Remember – only clear, green or brown glass bottles and jars can be recycled.

MORE INFORMATION

- www.visyrecycling.com.au– look in the Recycling Made Easy section
- www.recyclingglass.co.uk– fun information for students and teachers
- www.ollierecycles.com/planet/aus – click on the information section
- www.recyclingnearyou.com.au – this planet ark site enables you to find out what can be recycled in your local area