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# Frequently Asked Questions Australasian Recycling Label



Positive environmental actions, for everyone.

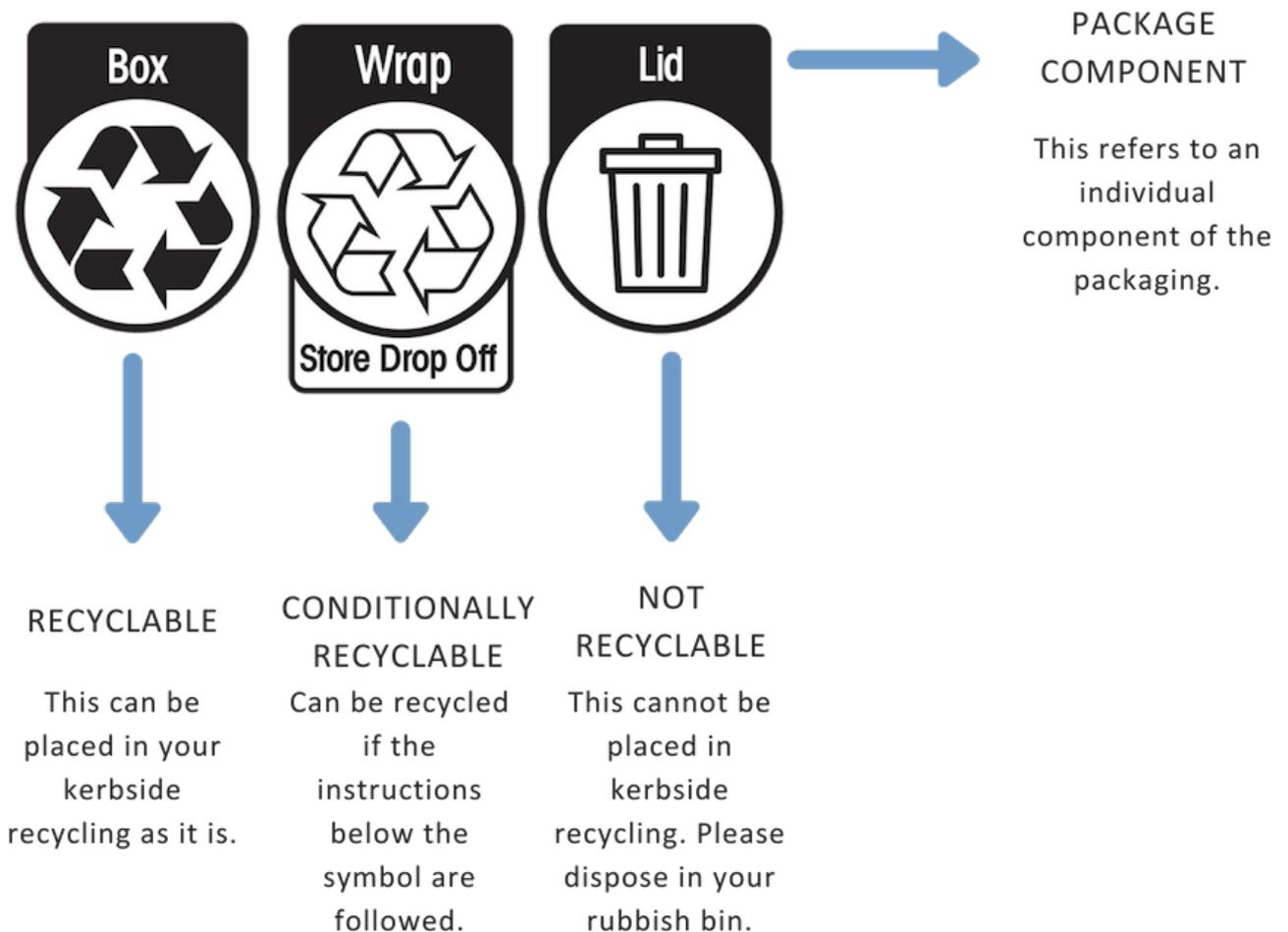
## What is the Australasian Recycling Label?

The Australasian Recycling Label, is an evidence-based labelling system that customers can trust to take the confusion out of recycling. The label provides easy to understand instructions about how to correctly dispose of every part of a product's packaging – whether it's a tray, a lid, a film etc. The Australasian Recycling Label was designed by Planet Ark and is a component of APCO's Packaging Recycling Label Program. It removes recycling confusion, educates consumers and reduces contamination of recycling streams at kerbside.

## How does the Australasian Recycling Label work?

Packaging is made up of separable components. The label identifies how to correctly dispose of each package component, in three categories:

1. **Recyclable:** The coloured recycling symbol means an item should go in kerbside recycling.
2. **Conditionally Recyclable:** The clear recycling symbol means an item is conditionally recyclable provided you follow the instructions under the symbol.
3. **Not Recyclable:** The bin symbol indicates an item can't be recycled and needs to go in the rubbish.



## What is different about the Australasian Recycling Label?

Australians care about the environment and want to do the right thing. But with hundreds of recycling labels out there getting recycling right can be confusing. Unlike other labels, the Australasian Recycling Label is an evidence-based system underpinned by the Packaging Recyclability Evaluation Portal (PREP). Because not all packaging is created equal, not all recycling labels should be the same. It is not possible for a piece of packaging to have the Australasian Recycling Label without a PREP assessment that backs up disposal claims.

## What is PREP?

PREP is an online tool that guides brand owners and packaging designers to help determine whether a packaging component is recyclable if disposed at kerbside. Uniquely, it provides feedback to the PREP user to explain why a component is not recyclable, which potentially allows for design changes prior to market release.

The PREP tool simulates the recycling ecosystem and has the capability to evaluate the technical recyclability of a package considering its weight, shape, size, inks and glues. It then maps it against the population percentage that has access for that item to be recycled via the council kerbside recycling service, using the data from RecyclingNearYou.com.au which gets updated annually.

## What is the APCO Packaging Recycling Label Program?

The APCO Packaging Recycling Label Program is a nation-wide labelling scheme that will help consumers better understand how to recycle packaging effectively and assist brand owners to design packaging that is recyclable at end-of-life. In conjunction with Planet Ark and PREP Design, this scheme aims to increase recycling and recovery rates and contribute to cleaner recycling streams.

## How does the Program work?

APCO Members have access to both PREP and the Australasian Recycling Label as part of their annual APCO Membership fee. Members use the PREP tool to assess the recyclability of their packaging and use these evaluation results to choose which recyclability label goes on packaging. The program is administered by APCO, who conducts audits annually to ensure the label is used correctly by brand owners.

APCO has set up a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) formed of experts in recycling and packaging to ensure recyclability determinations made by PREP are as accurate and up-to-date as possible. With a shared responsibility approach, Planet Ark has established a Marketing Advisory Committee (MAC) composed of independent, third-party advisors representing brand owners, retailers, recycling industry and local and state government, responsible for the development and implementation of a consumer education campaign. The aim of the campaign is to engage with the community, consumer groups, brand owners, the waste and recycling industry and all levels of government to raise awareness of the ARL, and increase correct recycling behaviours.

## Is the use of the Australasian Recycling Label mandatory?

The Australasian Recycling Label is currently a voluntary program. However, the scheme has been adopted by a significant proportion of the Australian business community and is expanding rapidly.

## Why does a piece of packaging not have the Australasian Recycling Label even though the brand is a program participant?

Sometimes it can take up to 3 years for brands to change their packaging. For many brands it is necessary to use all the current stock before placing packaging with new labelling on shelf.

## Why does my council not accept certain items that the Australasian Recycling Label says are recyclable?

The Australasian Recycling Label has different thresholds on recycling kerbside access levels, this means that in some rare cases, the Australasian Recycling Label will not be applicable to your council for certain pieces of packaging:

1. **Recyclable:** More than 80% of the population has access to council kerbside recycling for that piece of packaging.
2. **Conditionally Recyclable** (if it has the “Check Locally” instruction underneath): Between 60% and 80% of the population has access to council kerbside recycling for that piece of packaging.
3. **Not Recyclable:** Less than 60% of the population has access to council kerbside recycling for that piece of packaging.

## I am a brand owner/packaging manufacturer, how can I get the Australasian Recycling Label on my packaging?

Please contact the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation at [memberservices@packagingcovenant.org.au](mailto:memberservices@packagingcovenant.org.au).

## What role does the Australasian Recycling Label play in current waste education campaigns?

Research shows that the first place where consumers look for packaging disposal information is the package itself. The Australasian Recycling Label supports current waste education campaigns by providing consumers with the tools to make an informed decision. The consumer education campaign by Planet Ark aims to raise awareness of the label thanks to collaboration with different stakeholders such as government, businesses, community groups, schools etc.

## What role do governments play in the Program?

The Packaging Recycling Label Program is part of the Covenant 5-year Strategic Plan 2017-2022, which was endorsed by all governments in December 2016. APCO consults regularly with all jurisdictions as part of its reporting obligations to the Government Official Group (GOG), and will be collaborating closely with all jurisdictions to ensure messaging to consumers is consistent across all of Australia. Governments play a key role in providing ongoing support and advice on the Program, as well as offering their expertise as part of the MAC.

## How is the Program affected by China's restrictions on recyclable material imports?

While there will undoubtedly be some challenges for the local recycling industry in dealing with this policy, it also offers opportunities to focus on developing domestic markets, innovate within Australia and develop end-markets for recycled materials. The MAC will be best placed to address these challenges ensuring information shared with consumers is accurate and consistent with the processes of the recycling industry.

## Is the packaging actually getting recycled?

In Australia, the recycling process recovers and diverts around 33% of packaging consumed. Unfortunately, recoverable materials are often lost before they can be collected for sorting at material recycling facilities (MRFs) or via container deposit schemes (CDS). These losses can be attributed to incorrect disposal of packaging waste by households and businesses.

This means that recycling efforts and accurate and consistent on-pack recycling information have never been more important. It is possible to increase recycling rates in Australia; however, it is necessary that government, consumers, the waste industry and companies play their part.

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