

STUDY SHOWS WE THINK WE'RE WHEELIE GOOD RECYCLERS, BUT MOST OF US ARE RUBBISH

- Cleanaway launches online education resource – **Greenius** – to improve Australia's recycling accuracy.
- Research into Australians' recycling behaviours and attitudes shows only 25 per cent of us are separating waste correctly.
- Up to 35% of recycling needlessly going to landfill due to simple sorting errors.

Australians are keen on a more sustainable future, but they remain confused about fundamental recycling practices. These are the main findings of Cleanaway's Recycling Behaviours Report launched today to support its new Greenius online education platform to help consumers get recycling right.

The Report found 89 per cent of us think recycling is important and 74 per cent say we're good at it. However, with only 25 per cent of us separating waste correctly at every opportunity and almost 50 per cent of us still putting soft plastics in our kerbside recycling bins, further education is clearly needed.

Cleanaway NSW Sustainability Manager, Rebecca Evered, said these findings reflect the consumer behaviour in municipal waste collection services, making the need for online education tools like Greenius more important than ever.

"We're really encouraged by the support that recycling has in the community, and the public's intention to do the right thing, but unfortunately, we're losing a lot of valuable resource to landfill because people are unclear about what can go in the recycling bin. Greenius is a free, easy-to-use online learning platform designed to simplify recycling for all households. We know that most Aussies (57 per cent) rely on the internet for recycling advice, but they're often met with conflicting, outdated information. Greenius is designed to give consumers simple and consistent tips to get it right, every time," Rebecca said.

Greenius Ambassador and Clean Up Australia Chairman, Pip Kiernan, said the research proved the importance of Greenius as a tool to help educate all Australians to improve recycling recovery rates.

"It's the small changes in our habits that will make all the difference. Up to 35 per cent of recycling is still being lost to landfill due to contamination. We know there is a lot of "wish-cycling" going on, with people hoping that what they put in the bin can be recycled at the other end, but actually that's part of the problem. Good recycling can be ruined when people put the wrong thing in. If every

Cleanaway Waste Management Ltd is Australia's leading waste management company, with a national network of unique collection, processing, treatment and landfill assets. Cleanaway operates from over 250 locations and directly employs 6,500 people. Our philosophy is that all waste is a resource and we aim to incorporate recover, recycling and reuse throughout our operations and those of our clients. Our mission is to make a sustainable future possible for all our stakeholders.

Australia's waste industry employs directly and indirectly over 50,000 Australians and provides essential services to the community.

person focused on removing soft plastic, food, liquid and textiles from their recycling we'd resolve more than 50 per cent of all current recycling contamination." Pip said.

"With the extension of our partnership with Cleanaway, we can continue to help Australians learn about sustainability and recycling through hands-on experiences so they can be part of the solution to treat waste as a resource, not something that ends up in landfill."

The e-learning platform developed by Cleanaway takes users on a recycling journey through gamification, videos, animations and quizzes, and is easily accessed via mobile device or desktop.

Through education and easy-to-implement tips, Greenius aims to motivate people to facilitate and accelerate the transition to a circular economy, demonstrating how the small actions and changes we make every day can have lasting impacts for years to come.

Rebecca says while the education tool is ideal for students and families, it's designed to meet the needs of all Australians.

"Our research has uncovered one in four parents don't find it easy to teach their kids about recycling and nearly one third of Australians still find recycling confusing. Different regulations between councils and uncertainty around what can and can't be recycled can be really tricky to navigate," Rebecca said.

"On the bright side, we think users will be really surprised by how easy some of the universal recycling rules are to apply – and Greenius is here to empower people to make the right decisions when it comes to disposing of everyday household waste."

"The Recycling Behaviours Report found that only 15 per cent of Australians are familiar with the concept of a 'circular economy' – an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and keeping resources in continual use.

"Individuals, communities, government and businesses alike are all contributors to building a circular economy in Australia. And while it may sound complicated, it's just about being more mindful of how we choose and dispose of the materials we use."

Cleanaway has undertaken a range of best practice sustainable waste management activities to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. The Greenius platform is a more recent initiative supported by the CEFC that extends its commitment to educational activities designed to improve recycling behaviour.

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CEFC CEO Ian Learmonth said, “The CEFC is excited to work with Cleanaway to develop this innovative national education platform. By explaining how recycling works and pointing out some of the common mistakes we make when sorting our rubbish, Greenius can help us improve our emissions reduction efforts.”

“Cleanaway’s commitment to reducing the amount of waste going to landfill demonstrates best practice in the efficient use of resources. By applying the principles of the waste hierarchy and prioritising recycling over disposal or landfill, everyone can contribute positively to creating a circular economy and reducing landfill emissions.”

The Greenius education platform is available to the public online from 19 April 2021 and can be accessed via <https://www.cleanaway.com.au/greenius>. A full copy of the report can be downloaded [here](#).

The Recycling Behaviours Report and Greenius household education platform were made possible thanks to Cleanaway’s partnership with the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

Ends

Cleanaway’s Recycling Behaviours Report key findings:

General

- 89% of Australians consider recycling to be important
- 74% say they’re good at recycling
- Only 25% of Aussies always separate their waste into the appropriate bins at home, at work, and when out in public
- 47% incorrectly believe soft plastics can be put in the kerbside recycling bins
- 21% don’t realise you need to remove lids from plastic bottles before recycling
- 53% of Aussies wrongly think a pizza box with greasy stains can be recycled or composted
- 17% wrongly think recycling can be sealed in a plastic bag in the kerbside bin
- Only 15% of Aussies are familiar with the concept of the circular economy

Demographic breakdown

- 29% of adults still find recycling confusing
- Self-rated recycling abilities increase with age:
- 65% of 18-34-year-olds say they’re good or very good recyclers
- 74% of 35-54 year-olds say they’re good or very good recyclers

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- 82% of 55+ year-olds say they're good or very good recyclers

Parents and Children

- 86% of children learn about recycling at school
- 84% of kids learn about recycling from their parents
- 29% of kids learn about recycling online
- 77% of children consider recycling very important
- 47% of kids think children are better at recycling than adults
- 25% of parents say it's not easy to teach their kids about recycling

Research methodology

- An online survey was conducted with 1,000 Australians, including a sub-audience of 293 parents of children aged 8-18. These parents were asked to allow their children to complete a shorter survey once the parents had completed their own.
- Surveys were completed between Friday, 27 November 2020 and Monday, 7 December 2020.
- The data was weighted to be representative of the Australian population with respect to gender and age.

About Clean Up Australia

Founded by Ian Kiernan, AO, Clean Up Australia is one of the country's most recognised and trusted environmental organisations, inspiring and empowering communities to clean up, fix up and conserve our environment.

Over the past three decades, Clean Up Australia has evolved into an organisation that works with community, government and businesses to provide practical solutions to help Australians all live more sustainably every day of the year. Today the organisation's focus is as much on preventing rubbish entering our environment as it is removing what has already accumulated.

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