



Shoalhaven City Council collects over 12 million kg of recyclable material annually via the yellow lid kerbside recycling service.

The bins are emptied by a contractor, SUEZ, who transports the materials to a recycling centre or Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Bomaderry. The MRF is owned by a company called [Shoalhaven Recycling](#).

The materials are sorted and baled, then on-sold to several different recycling plants, depending on market conditions. These outlets are located both in Australia eg [Australian Recycled Plastics](#) in western NSW, and overseas eg Hong Kong and Malaysia. From here, the plastics are processed to create “Flake” and “Pellets” which is the form acceptable by manufacturers to make into new plastic products.

Sending material offshore

The process for Shoalhaven Recycling to send baled, recyclable product overseas is complex. Australia has a highly regulated Customs Service maintaining rigorous controls to minimise risks and many international markets are also subject to similar rigorous controls.

Shoalhaven Recycling is required to take photos of: 1) the empty container, 2) the container partially filled, 3) the container fully loaded, 4) the load with one container door closed with the container information displayed, and 5) the shipping seal with the doors closed. Details of product type, number of bales loaded, point of departure and final destination must also be supplied. Random inspections are carried out at the point of destination.

“Contamination”

At the sorting facility in Bomaderry, staff have to sort through the incorrect material that is placed in the recycling bin eg nappies, garden waste, soft plastics (plastic film and plastic bags) and a myriad of other items of garbage. This incorrect material (or “contamination” as it is known in the industry) accounts for 8% of incoming loads and is sent to landfill, at a cost to Shoalhaven Recycling who pay the same landfill rates as the rest of the community.

Contamination in recycling degrades the recyclable product, lowering its value. It is contamination globally, not just from Australia, that enacted the “China Sword” policy.

When China flagged to the rest of the world that it would be closing its doors to recycling from other countries, Councils and the recycling industry as a whole, urged both State and Federal Governments to fund innovation, infrastructure and plastics recycling initiatives on our home shores utilising the [waste levy](#) money collected from Councils. To date, no significant investment has been made into long-term local solutions to the recycling crisis.

In summary

- **no** recyclables collected in the Shoalhaven are sent to landfill. There is no incentive to landfill due to landfill costs
- Residents should continue to separate their waste and use the yellow lid recycling bin. We still rely on a clean and high quality recyclable product in the yellow bin to market to recyclers.
- The decision by China to no longer accept recycling materials from foreign countries has created an opportunity for the Australian government to invest in building domestic recycling and reprocessing capacity as well as building market demand for recycled product.
- A strong domestic manufacturing and re-processing industry means more jobs for Australians
- Manufacturers need to be incentivised to use recycled content and the government needs to provide the impetus for this to happen as well as work directly with those manufacturers seeking to develop solutions to single-use packaging
- Waste management, recycling and resource recovery in all its formats, is a **shared responsibility** among manufacturers, industry, governments, and community.
- We still need community to think about their choices, avoid purchasing waste in the first place, particularly single use plastic and be encouraged to purchase goods made of recycled content.

More information

Shoalhaven City Council urges residents to keep recycling properly to reduce pressure on our natural, finite resources. If you are confused about what can/cannot go in the bin, check out this [handy reference guide](#). More information about your yellow lid kerbside recycling bin in the Shoalhaven is available on the Council website [here](#).

More information about the Recycling industry response to the China Sword and demand for re-investment can be found [here](#)

[Planet Ark’s response and opinion on China Sword - a positive view](#)

Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia (WMRR) is the national peak body for the waste and resource recovery. Their response to the recent “60 Minutes” TV program on recycling can be found [here](#)

A united recycling industry response to “60 Minutes” TV program can be read [here](#).