

Recycling fact sheet: Aluminium

Aluminium is made from bauxite and is 100% recyclable. Recycled aluminium is just as valuable as the raw products it is made from because the quality remains the same after the recycling process.

All aluminium packaging such as cans and foil can be recycled in household recycling bins. This material is then recycled and remade into cans, bicycles, barbeques and many other products.

Did you know?

- Every year Brisbane residents recycle approximately 529 tonnes of aluminium, conserving more than 2500 tonnes of bauxite.¹
- In just 60 days, your aluminium can could be recycled into part of a plane, a bike, a car, or simply back on the shelf at the supermarket as a new can.²
- Aluminium cans are the world's most recycled beverage container.³

Benefits of recycling

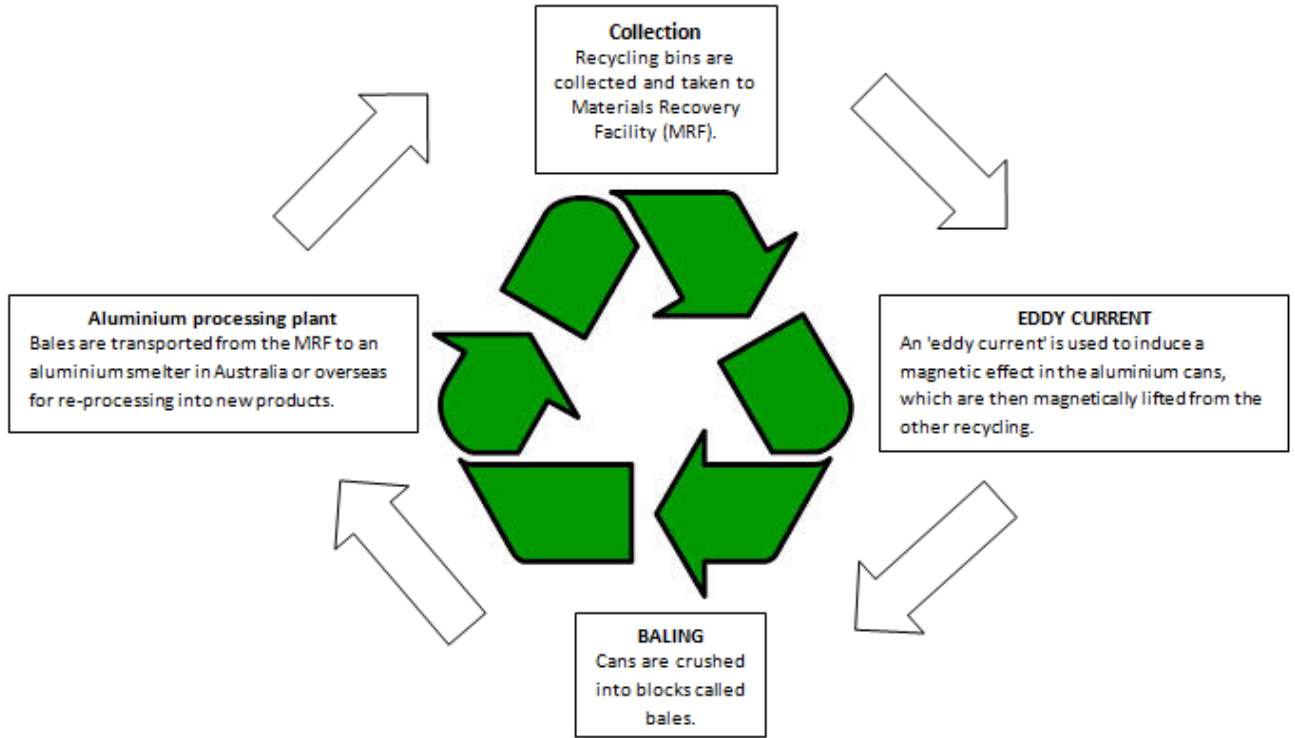
There are many benefits to recycling aluminium, including those listed below.

- Recycling aluminium significantly reduces the amount of waste going to landfill. More than 2 billion cans are recycled by Australians every year.⁴ If these cans were buried in landfill, they would take up a large amount of valuable space.
- Recycling aluminium saves energy. The amount of power used to make one aluminium can from raw materials could be used to make 20 cans from recycled materials.⁵ Recycling one aluminium can saves enough energy to run a television for three hours.
- Recycling aluminium saves non-renewable resources. For every tonne of aluminium recycled, five tonnes of bauxite are saved.⁶

How is aluminium recycled?

After recyclable materials are collected from the wheelie bin with the yellow lid, they are taken to the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) to be recycled. Aluminium is separated from other materials at the MRF with an eddy current, which is a process that uses magnets to lift the aluminium away from other products. The aluminium is then crushed into big blocks called bales. The bales are transported from the MRF to an aluminium smelter for reprocessing into new products.

The following diagram shows this aluminium recycling process.



Graphic showing the cyclic process of aluminium recycling.

¹ Visy *Brisbane City Council recycling report 2013-2014*

² www.aluminum.org

³ www.earth9.com/

⁴ www.sita.com.au

^{5,6} www.aluminium-cans.com.au/