

What happens to your recycling?

Your recycling bin with the yellow lid is collected every fortnight by the collection truck and taken to VISY's Material Recovery Facility (MRF).

The MRF is a large factory with more than a kilometre of conveyor belts where household recyclables are sorted into individual material streams such as paper, steel and aluminium. The Brisbane MRF is able to process approximately 25 tonnes of material an hour using a combination of manual, mechanical and automated computer sorting.

After sorting, the materials are baled up, ready to be sent to local and international markets, where they are then reprocessed into new products.

Sorting process

Collection

A Brisbane City Council contractor truck collects recycling from your home or business.

Delivery

The recycling collection truck empties the recycling onto the receiving area at the MRF.

Manual pre-sort

Materials are sent along a conveyor belt and staff removes any non-recyclables (such as plastic bags, nappies and food waste) by hand.

Mechanical sorting

Trommels, bounce conveyors and disc screens are used to separate heavy recyclables such as plastic, glass, steel and aluminium from lighter recyclables such as paper. A trommel is a large rotating cylinder similar to the inside of a washing machine and has large holes all through the middle.

Heavy recyclables fall through the holes leaving lightweight material to travel through. The bounce conveyor and disc screen use the force of gravity to bounce heavier items down the conveyor belt, while lighter items, such as paper and cardboard, stick to the conveyor and travel through to the paper mill for reprocessing.

Optical sort

Separates paper from containers and contamination.

Magnet

Rotating magnet separates steel cans and removes them to a separate container.

Eddy current

A magnetic field is used to generate an electric current called an 'Eddy Current' in the aluminium. This current generates a secondary magnetic field in the aluminium that causes it to be pushed away from the other materials and separated.



Optical sort plastic

Optical sorting technology is used to identify and sort different types of plastic material.

Glass sorting facility

Glass is sent to a glass sorting facility where advanced infrared technology is used to sort material into clear, green and amber glass ready for reprocessing.

Baling

After sorting materials are baled or stored in containers ready for transport or reprocessing into new products.