



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **KEEP RECYCLING – IT’S WORTH IT**

Media reports about Australian recyclate material being returned by Indonesian authorities inappropriately undermine the community’s recycling efforts, according to the Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR), the national peak body for the sector.

“Australians massively support and strongly participate in Councils’ kerbside recycling programs because recycling delivers enormous environmental and economic benefits. They should keep participating because some 90% of what we ratepayers put in our kerbside recycling bins ends up as new products which reduce waste to landfill, conserve resources, cut greenhouse gases, and produce 50,000 domestic jobs in regional areas,” Pete Shmigel, ACOR CEO, said today.

“Australians recycled some 32 million tonnes of total material last year. The vast majority of that was made into products by local companies. Less than 1.5 million tonnes of material from kerbside recycling was exported to overseas companies to make into products. Of that, some 65,000 tonnes went to Indonesia because buyers there bought it as feedstock for their factories – and there’s a lack of local demand for it.

“Some 500 containers marked to be sent back by Indonesia that apparently don’t meet technical specifications is not substantial in the successful scheme of Australians’ recycling efforts. Some off-spec material happens in every industry – from building to agriculture – and that’s what has happened in this situation.

“It is totally wrong to suggest that Australian recyclate export material is ‘toxic’. It is more likely to be material from our households that’s been earnestly but mistakenly put in the yellow bin – like electric toothbrushes, pet carcasses and food scraps. Such items cause whole loads to be deemed outside of specifications.

“Moreover, under the Prime Minister’s leadership, COAG has very recently decided – and industry has strongly welcomed – that material should no longer be exported and that we should become fully responsible for and more sovereign with our recycling. Industry and government are currently working together to implement the new ban, including investment in new technology and new markets like recycled roads to keep all the benefits of recycling here in Australia.

“We need Australians to continue their great work and to closely follow their Councils’ instructions on what to put in the recycling bin and what NOT to put there. If in doubt, throw it in the garbage bin and keep recycling’s quality up as we aim to make more recycled products in Australia.

“If we don’t keep up recycling and improve its quality, we will do way more environmental harm than 500 off-spec containers will,” Shmigel said.

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19 SEPTEMBER 2019**