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NSW HELPS PAINT DISPOSAL SCHEME SMASH COLLECTION RECORDS

A record-breaking 8 million kilograms of old paint and paint packaging was diverted from Australian landfills and waterways last year, new research from national paint recovery scheme Paintback has revealed.

And New South Wales is embracing the scheme, with more than 3.5 million kg of used paint and packaging dropped off at locations across the state since collections began in 2016. Residents and commercial painters in Sydney's suburbs of Liverpool, Badgerys Creek, and Casula are among those leading the charge as the state's top disposers of unwanted paint, with Paintback revealing Liverpool Community Recycling Centre in the City of Liverpool as the state's top-performing paint disposal centre. More than 580,000 kg of paint and packaging has been recovered at Liverpool since 2016.

The successful Paintback Scheme, which celebrates its fifth anniversary this month, receives unwanted paint and paint packaging across its 155 permanent Australian collection sites and ensures it is disposed of safely or repurposed for other industrial uses. The scheme is supported by paint manufacturers through a 15c-a-litre levy on paint products. Commercial painters and DIY can use the scheme, dropping off up to 100 litres per visit.

In 2019/2020 alone, New South Wales safely disposed of more than 1.8 million kg of paint and packaging at Paintback collection sites – 235,000 kg more than the previous year. Nationally, Australians returned 8.1 million kg of unwanted paint and packaging in 2019/2020 – smashing the previous year's tally of 6.2 million kg.

And by the end of June this year, Australians are on track to have safely disposed of more than 28 million kg of paint and packaging since Paintback started five years ago.

"Our success is only possible through support from Australians, and collaboration with industry leaders, paint sellers, government and about 100 local councils who help us operate," Paintback CEO Karen Gomez said.

"They have helped Paintback live up to its values of being responsible, collaborative, inclusive and innovative, while inspiring people to live sustainably and make a real difference in keeping unwanted paint out of landfill.

"Thanks to them we are ready to seize the opportunities of the next five years to divert more paint from landfill and develop new uses for unwanted paint and paint pails."

But Ms Gomez cautioned many Australians still didn't know how to best get rid of paint - a major concern, since it has been estimated that up to 5 per cent of paint purchased each year ends up surplus to requirements. Paintback research shows that while more than one in three people in NSW (38%) have paint stored away, almost half (47%) didn't know there were organisations to help them dispose of unwanted paint.

The survey showed similar results nationwide, with 36% of Australians having old or unwanted paint at home, while more than half (54%) did not know how best to dispose of their paint safely.



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“Household paint needs to be disposed of safely, otherwise it can end up in landfill or in our vital waterways,” Ms Gomez said.

“The best thing is to make sure you don’t buy the right amount of paint for your project. But if you can’t re-use your paint, drop it off free of charge to a Paintback site and give your paint a second life.

“Paintback then transports the used paint from collection sites for treatment and repurposing, significantly reducing the paint in landfill and other inappropriate disposal pathways.

“You will protect the environment, support innovation, and help unwanted paint be repurposed for other uses.”

Currently, unwanted paint is converted into an alternative fuel source replacing coal, or its water is extracted and used by other industries, reducing the need to use mains water.

This is where Paintback is funding Australian research into how it can improve the recovery of the paint and pails, to reduce demand on virgin resources.

Paintback aims to have 90 per cent of unwanted paint diverted into Australia’s budding circular economy – where products are re-used or are repurposed for other manufacturing or industry processes to keep them circulating instead of being discarded permanently.

“Paint already contributes to circular economy by conserving and refurbishing a vast array of buildings and assets, but we are investigating new ways of putting unwanted paint into circulation and creating new markets for Australia’s unwanted paint,” Ms Gomez said. “We want household paint to become a showcase for the circular economy.”

NSW’s top 10 paint disposal sites

	SITE	LGA	TOTAL PAINT AND PACKAGING RECOVERED as at Feb 2021 (KG)
1	Liverpool CRC	City of Liverpool	580,292
2	Glendenning Cleanaway	City of Blacktown	445,168
3	Thornleigh Community Recycling Centre	Hornsby Shire Council	316,570
4	Canada Bay Recycling Centre	City of Canada Bay	258,573
5	Kooragang Island Cleanaway	City of Newcastle	208,868
6	Kimbriki Resource Recovery Centre	Northern Beaches Council	200,421
7	Wollongong Community Recycling Centre	Wollongong City Council	183,369
8	Unanderra Cleanaway	Wollongong City Council	150,835
9	Albury Waste Management Centre	Albury City Council	143,838
10	Salamander Bay Waste Transfer Station	Port Stephens Council	126,107
Total	All 30 NSW permanent sites, and pop-up sites	Total	3.5 million kg

Photo Opportunity Available

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