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TERRITORIANS HELP 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 Territorians are embracing the scheme, with more than 113,000 kg of used paint and packaging dropped off at four locations in Darwin and Alice Springs since the scheme began in 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, the NT safely disposed of more than 48,000 kg of paint and packaging at Paintback collection sites. 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 one in three Australians (34%) have old or unwanted paint at home, more than half (54%) didn't know there were organisations to help them dispose of unwanted paint.

“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.



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“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.”

The Northern Territory’s paint disposal sites

	SITE	LGA	TOTAL PAINT AND PACKAGING RECOVERED as at February 2021 (KG)
1	Shoal Bay Waste Management Facility	City of Darwin	48,944
2	Holtze Cleanaway	City of Darwin	34,722
3	NT Recycling Solutions	City of Darwin	27,496
4	Alice Springs – The Rediscovery Centre	Alice Springs Town Council	2,420
Total	All four NT permanent sites, plus pop-up sites		113,582 kg

Photo Opportunity Available

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