

# BARWON MATTRESS RECYCLING PROJECT



## PROJECT SNAPSHOT

The Barwon Mattress Recycling Project worked with mattress traders in the Barwon Region to implement a mattress take back scheme.

The project also facilitated all member councils implementing a regional ban on mattresses being dumped to landfill and providing mattress drop off facilities at transfer stations.

Nine local bedding stores have signed up to the program, and to date over 10,000 mattresses have been collected for recycling. This has saved approximately 7,800 m<sup>3</sup> of landfill space, in which over 1,170 tonnes of municipal garbage could be placed.

## KEY PROJECT LEARNINGS

In store health and safety policies restricted some stores ability to offer a take back service as it prohibited them placing an old mattress next to a new mattress on the truck- this led to resources being developed to assist these stores in promoting the recycling facilities pick up service and the regions transfer station facilities.

Mattress collection points at all transfer stations in the region were outdoors- this meant that in wet weather the mattresses got damaged causing difficulties in transporting them and reducing the number of quality mattresses that could be reused. Funding was sought to support the construction of mattress storage sheds at all transfer stations to ensure mattresses remained dry.

### GREENHOUSE SAVINGS

*10,000 mattresses equates to approximately 125 tonnes of steel, 20 tonnes of wood and 15 tonnes of foam.*

*Recycling this material saves 239 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>- the equivalent of planting 373 trees or taking 40 cars off the road for a year.*

## KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Baseline numbers of mattresses being deposited into landfills in the region were estimated and used to entice a mattress recycling facility to set up in the region.

A breakfast meeting was held targeting all the major mattress manufacturers and retailers in the region.

Traders were encouraged to sign up to the program and to take a trader stewardship approach to mattress disposal.

Support materials were developed for the traders including a promotional poster showing the process by which mattresses are recycled (see below) and a brochure with more detailed information.

Member councils were met with to discuss recovery options at the transfer stations. From these discussions a regional ban on mattress into landfill was implemented by all member councils.

Funding was secured for the construction of sheds at all the transfer stations in the region to store the mattresses in.

## KEY PROJECT OUTCOMES

Nine traders currently support the program by either offering a take back service or promoting the Dreamsafe pick up service.

Mattresses incur an individual gate fee (approx \$15) at all council transfer stations and are stockpiled for recycling.

Over 10,000 mattresses have been collected for recycling in the region since the project began at the end of 2006.

**Don't dump it...  
Recycle your mattress!**

**Good quality old mattress** | **Poor quality old mattress**

**Sanitizing**  
Quality secondhand mattresses are treated to extract foreign materials and sanitized before being placed in a plastic bag for resale.

**Foam**  
Foam is removed from the mattress and reprocessed into carpet underlay.

**Timber**  
Timber is separated and chipped for garden mulch and alternative fuel.

**Springs**  
Springs are removed and sent as scrap metal to be melted down and recycled.

**Ask us how.**

The diagram illustrates the recycling process for two types of mattresses. A 'Good quality old mattress' is shown being sanitized and placed in a plastic bag for resale. A 'Poor quality old mattress' is shown being broken down into three components: foam, which is reprocessed into carpet underlay; timber, which is separated and chipped for garden mulch and alternative fuel; and springs, which are removed and sent as scrap metal to be melted down and recycled.