VERSION 1: OCTOBER 2025

PAPER AND PAPERBOARD

CONSUMPTION AND RECOVERY

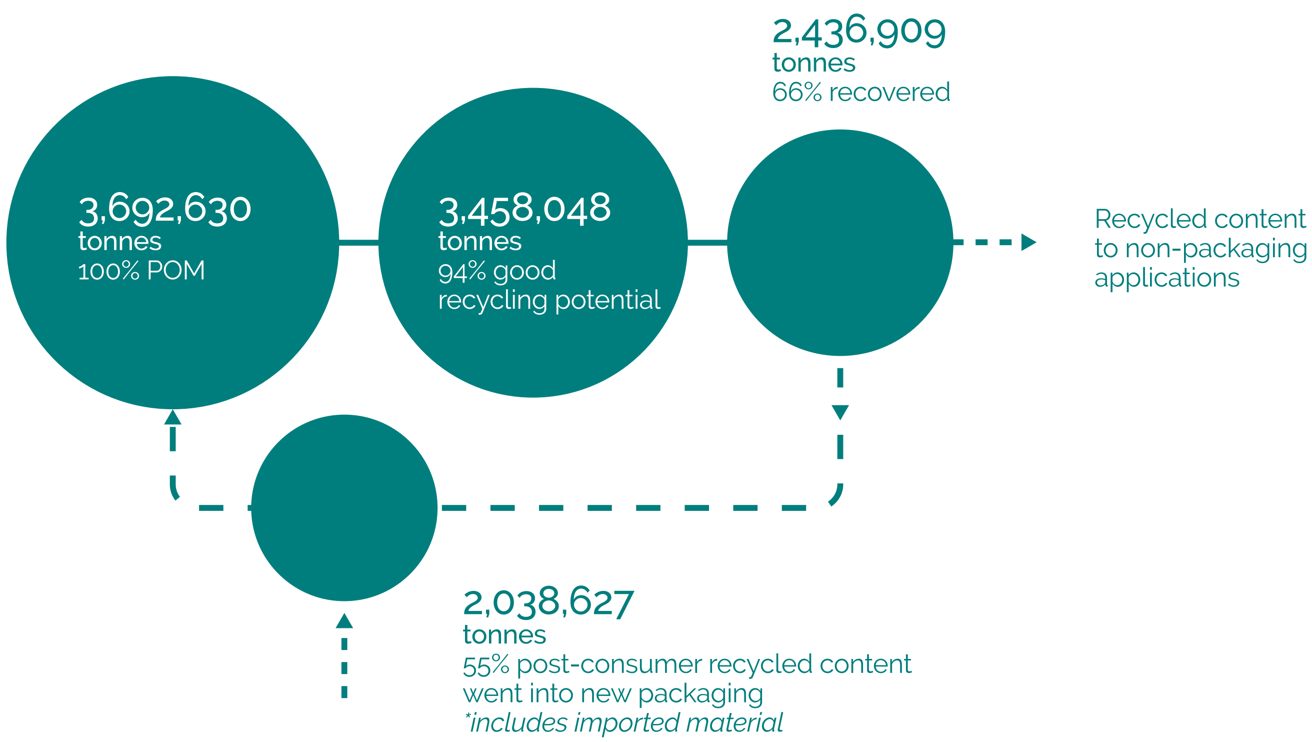
2023–2024 FACTSHEET

Australian
Packaging Covenant
Organisation

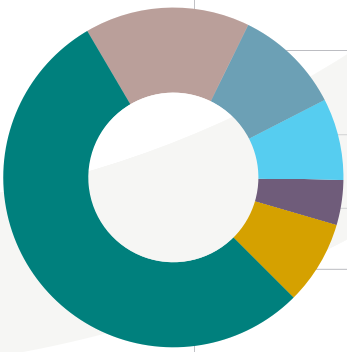
Summary
PAPER AND PAPERBOARD

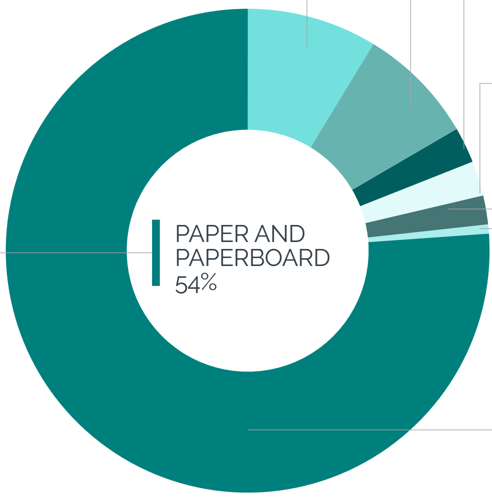
- Most packaging material placed on market (POM) is made from paper and paperboard (54%). That's 3,692,630 tonnes.
- Its volume POM means **paper and paperboard have a significant ability to influence the packaging targets.**
- Paper and paperboard POM decreased to near 2021–22 levels, with the first observed fall since the start of reporting in 2017–18.
- **2,038,627 tonnes of paper and paperboard (55%) POM was from post-consumer sources.**
- **Despite 94% of paper and paperboard packaging POM receiving a "good recycling potential" rating, only 66% of paper and paperboard was recovered throughout 2023-24.**
- **Paper and paperboard recovery rate has increased slightly**, with approximately 66% of paper and paperboard POM recovered in 2023-24, compared with 65% in 2022-23.
- There is almost as much **paper & paperboard packaging going to landfill (1,255,720 tonnes) as there is total plastic packaging POM (1,269,095 tonnes).**
- **Further improvements to paper and paperboard recovery represents the largest opportunity for advancing packaging recovery rates.** A 10% lift in paper and paperboard recovery would deliver an additional 369,263 tonnes of packaging recovery. This would require equivalent uplifts in domestic paper & paperboard reprocessing capacity and end market development.
- **Australia's paper and paperboard packaging supply chain is strongly influenced by global markets.** Imported packaging represent approximately 47% of paper & paperboard packaging POM in Australia. At the same time, recovery also relies heavily on export markets, representing 48% of total paper & paperboard recovered.

Material recovery

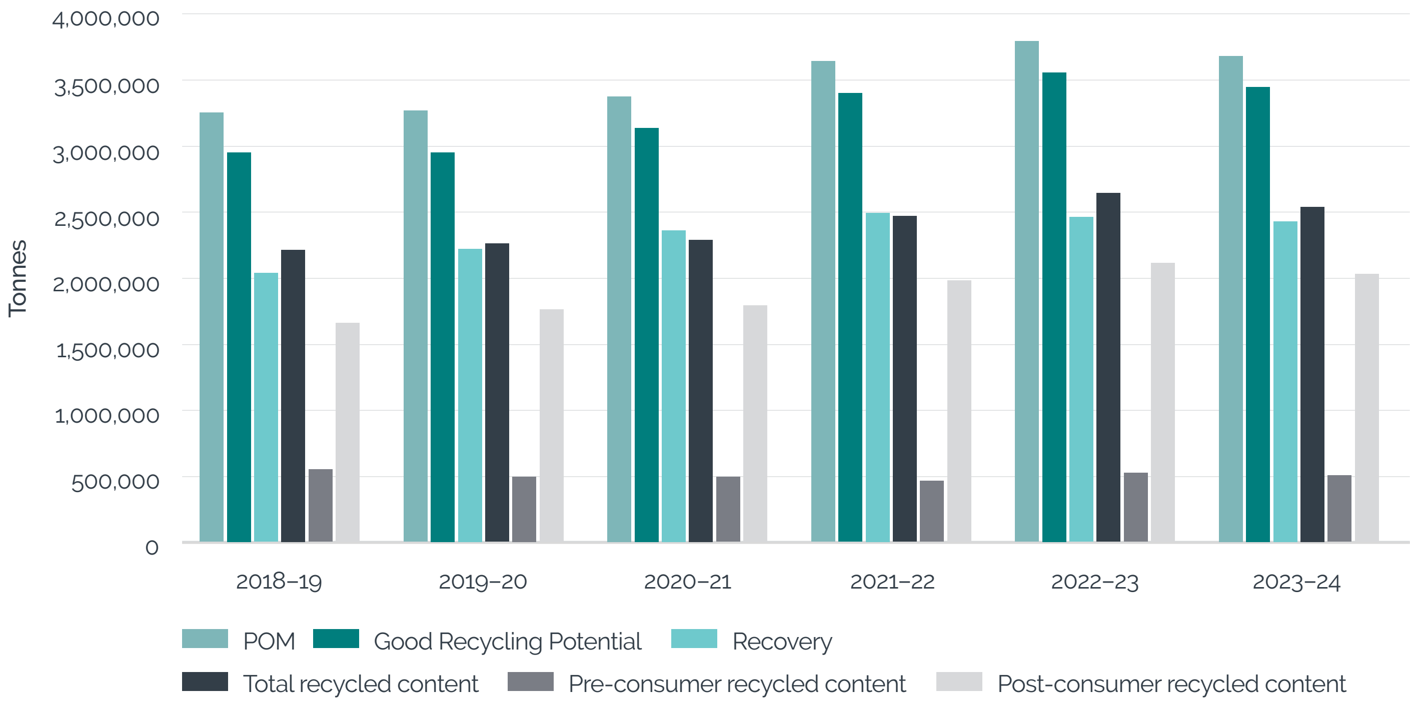


Placed on market
PAPER AND PAPERBOARD

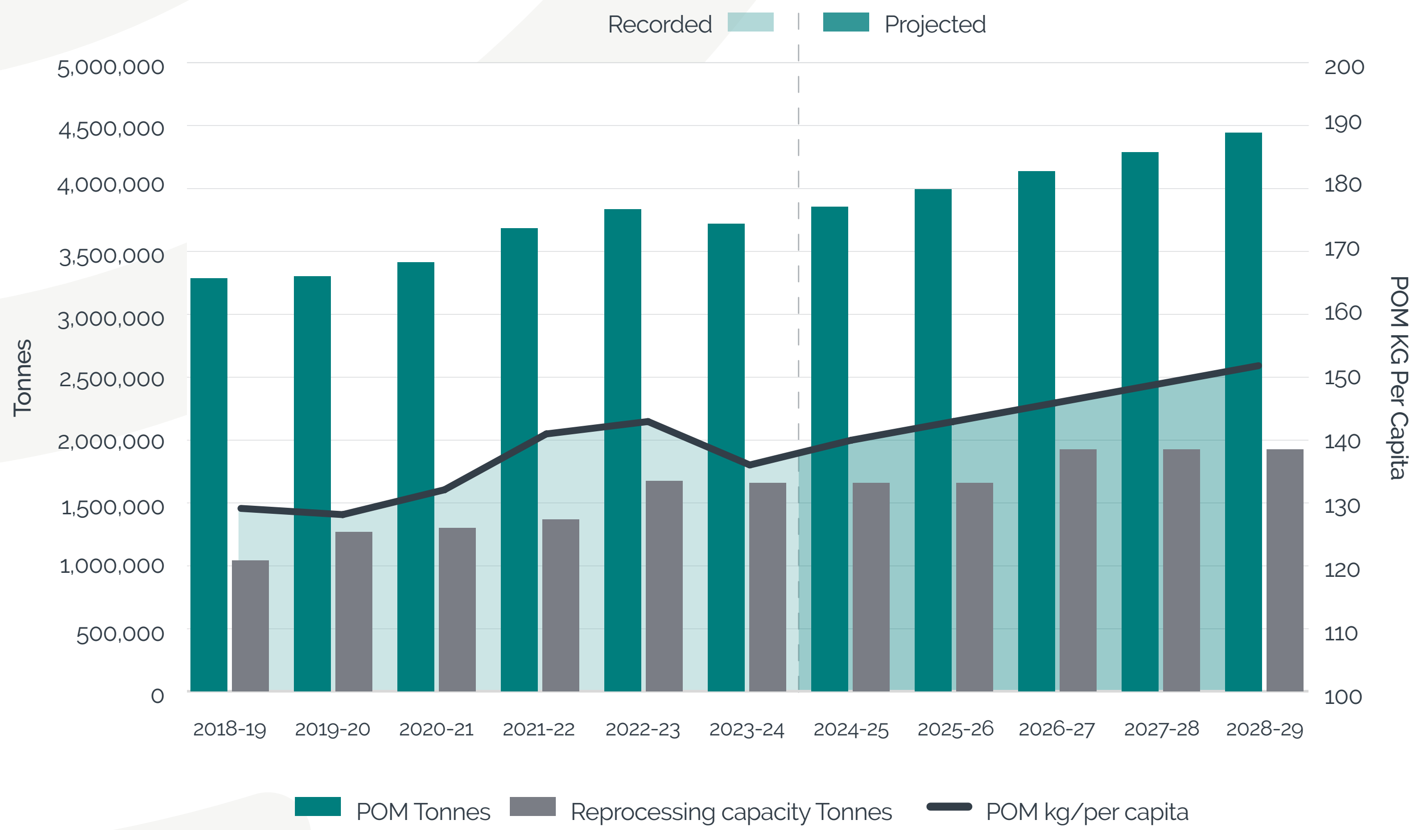




TRENDS



Reprocessing capacity



Top 3 priorities
PAPER AND PAPERBOARD

The following three component groups represent 93% of all paper and paperboard packaging POM in 2023-24.

	POM (tonnes)	Recovery (tonnes)	Pre-consumer recycled content (tonnes)	Post-consumer recycled content (tonnes)
Corrugated cardboard	2,789,021	2,060,547	369,840	1,853,480
Boxboard/ cartonboard	306,700	106,198	68,905	82,645
Kraft paper	339,866	0	55,744	22,874

Progress towards the National Packaging Targets

OUTCOME	TARGET	PROGRESS
Packaging designed for circularity and sustainability	**100%** of packaging is reusable, recyclable or compostable	**94%** was classified as having good recycling potential
	Problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic packaging will be phased out	*NOT APPLICABLE*
Harmonised and expanded reuse and recovery systems are in place	**70%** of plastic packaging is recycled or composted	*NOT APPLICABLE*
Deep and resilient markets exist for recycled materials	**60%** recycled content included across Paper and Paperboard *Target across all materials is 50%*	**55%** of Paper and Paperboard was made with post-consumer recycled material

For more information on 2023-24 Australian Packaging and Consumption Recovery data visit:

www.apco.org.au or contact APCO.

All data provided within this document is from or estimated based on the data available within the sources outlined below.

These figures do not include packaging lost to litter or with extended shelf life.

Rounding of percentage data may result in discrepancies among totals. For more details, please refer to the Consumption and Recovery Report 2023-24.

Population data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics – National, State and Territory Population data sets.