

## Assessment of waste exports from Australia in November 2018

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Blue Environment is commissioned by the Department of the Environment and Energy to provide a monthly analysis of waste export data to June 2019. The data is provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which provides monthly data covering the previous six months, including any updates.

For this month's report we have amended two export code classification:

1. The classification of code 40040000 'Waste, parings and scrap of rubber (excluding hard rubber) and powders and granules' (which is shredded tyres exported mostly for energy recovery) has been changed from 'plastics' to 'hazardous'. In previous export analyses and in the National Waste Report 2018, this material was included in plastics in line with the [2016-17 Australian Plastics Recycling Survey](#). We have determined it is better included under 'hazardous' in line with the general classification system used for national waste data.
2. The classification of code 40129000 'Solid or cushion rubber tyres, rubber tyre treads (incl. interchangeable tyre treads) and rubber tyre flaps' has been changed from 98% waste ('hazardous') to 0% waste, as we now understand this is not waste.

### Summary

In November 2018, Australia exported around 385,300 tonnes of waste with a value of \$A512 million. This represents an increase of 11% in the quantity and a decrease of 8% in value of waste exports compared with October 2018. It was the highest monthly total since March 2018.

### Comparison by destination

The top six countries receiving waste exports from Australia in November 2018 accounted for 85% of all that was exported. These countries were, in order, Vietnam, Indonesia, China (including Hong Kong and Macau), India, Malaysia and Taiwan. Other than Taiwan, these countries were also in the top six receivers of waste in October 2018, but Vietnam switched places in rankings with Indonesia to become top receiver; Indonesia moved to second place; China, India and Malaysia's rankings remained the same, and Taiwan moved from seventh to sixth place. Exports to Thailand slipped to under 10,000 tonnes for the first time in the last 17 months, mainly due to lower metals quantities.

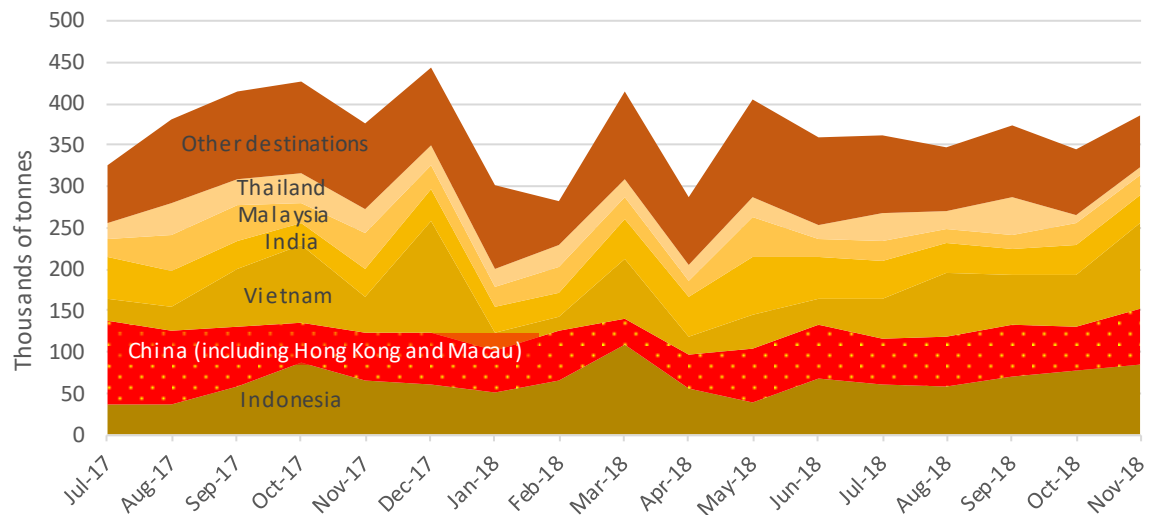
In November 2018, most of the top six received more waste their monthly 2017-18 average except for India (3,800 tonnes or 10% less) and Malaysia (800 tonnes or 3% less). Vietnam received an additional 41,600 tonnes (67%) and China 13,700 tonnes (26%). Table 1 compares the top six receiving countries in November 2018 with their October 2018 volumes and 2017-18 monthly average.

*Table 1 Comparison of month-to-month waste export volume by destination*

Export destination by monthly rank		November 18		October 18			2017-18	%
		Tonnes	% of total	Rank	Tonnes	% change	monthly avg	change
1	Vietnam	103,400	27%	2	61,800	67%	50,300	106%
2	Indonesia	85,000	22%	1	78,000	9%	60,600	40%
3	China	66,600	17%	3	52,900	26%	62,100	7%
4	India	33,900	9%	4	37,700	-10%	42,400	-20%
5	Malaysia	24,100	6%	5	24,900	-3%	31,200	-23%
6	Taiwan	15,500	4%	7	14,600	6%	14,700	5%
Top 6 total		328,500	85%		269,800	22%		
<b>Monthly total</b>		<b>385,300</b>	-		<b>345,600</b>	<b>11%</b>		

Figure 1 (overleaf) presents the monthly trend in exports of waste from Australia to the top six receiving countries and the other destinations (by total quantity) between July 2017 and November 2018. Examined over this timeframe, the top six includes Thailand but not Taiwan. Exports to China have remained relatively stable since May 2018. Exports to the top six overall rose by 5% in this timeframe.

**Figure 1** Monthly exports of waste from Australia by destination, ranked by total quantity received, July 2017 – November 2018



### Comparison by material

Table 2 presents a comparison of waste export volumes between October 2018 and November 2018 and the monthly average from 2017-18 as well as the year to date volumes.

**Month to month** – November 2018 saw increased exports of metals (8%), plastics (28%), paper and cardboard (20%) and ‘other’ (22%) compared with October. Exports of hazardous waste declined by 8%. The large reduction in exports of hazardous waste is representative of a trend which experiences sharp spikes (as seen in July and May 2018 data), probably due to the removal of waste from stockpiles for export.

**2017-18 monthly average** – The quantity of metals and plastics exported in November 2018 was greater than the monthly average for 2017-18 but paper and cardboard, hazardous waste and ‘other’ were below their 2017-18 average. Overall, October 2018 total exports of waste were slightly higher (5%) than the monthly average for 2017-18.

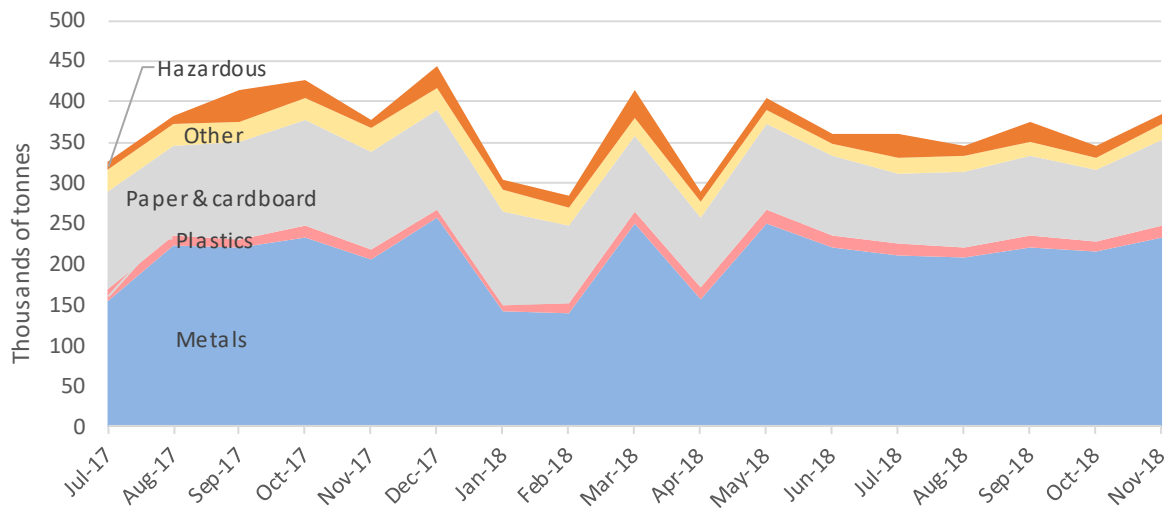
**Year to date** – The total year-to-date waste exports to November 2018 were about 1.81 million tonnes, compared with 1.93 million tonnes in the equivalent period last financial year (6% less).

**Table 2** Comparison of waste export volume by material

Material category	Month		% change	Monthly avg 2017-18	% change	Year to date (Jul-Nov)		% change
	Oct 18	Nov 18				2017-18	2018-19	
Metals	215,400	232,100	8%	203,800	14%	1,032,100	1,088,500	5%
Plastics	12,600	16,200	28%	13,200	22%	67,000	69,900	4%
Paper & cardboard	87,100	104,200	20%	109,800	-5%	602,700	466,800	-23%
Other	16,000	19,600	22%	23,800	-18%	133,200	92,100	-31%
Hazardous	14,400	13,300	-8%	17,900	-26%	90,400	95,900	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>345,600</b>	<b>385,300</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>368,500</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1,925,400</b>	<b>1,813,200</b>	<b>-6%</b>

Figure 2 presents the monthly trend in exports of waste from Australia by material type between July 2017 and November 2018. Overall, monthly exports have remained relatively steady this financial year compared with the last.

Figure 2 Monthly exports of waste from Australia by material type, July 2017 – November 2018



### The current status of waste import restrictions

Table 3 presents our understanding of waste import restrictions which countries have implemented or are planning to implement. This information has been compiled based on the best publicly available sources, sometimes translated from local languages. It therefore may not match the most up-to-date information available through official channels.

Table 3 Current status of waste import restrictions

Country	Scope of ban	Announced & implemented	Associated export volumes Material	2017-18	Nov 18	Impact and uncertainties
China	Restricted the import of certain materials covering specific commodity codes, mainly by specifying a threshold contamination rate of 0.5% <sup>1</sup> .  A ban (issued in April 2018) on the import of 32 varieties of solid waste codes which were previously restricted. 16 of these are banned from 31 December and the other 16 to take effect from 31 December 2019 <sup>2</sup> .	Ann.: Jul & Nov-17, Apr-18.  Imp.: Jan & Mar-18, Dec-18, Dec-19	Plastic, paper, metals, other	745,700 (62,100/mth)	66,500	Impact evident. Uncertainty whether newer announcements override older ones.  Total tonnes exported in the last six months affected by 2018 banned codes = 44,300 tonnes.  Total exported in the last six months that would be affected by 2019 banned codes = 0 tonnes.
Malaysia	Import permits revoked from 114 factories that process imported plastic waste <sup>3</sup> .	Jul-18.	Plastic	71,300 (5,900/mth)	4,300	No impact apparent

Country	Scope of ban	Announced & implemented	Associated export volumes Material	Associated export volumes		Impact and uncertainties
				2017-18	Nov 18	
Thailand	Revoked a broad plastic scrap import allowance, meaning plastic waste and scrap is banned from import by 2021 <sup>4, 5, 6</sup> . Looking to ban imports of e-waste within 2 years <sup>4</sup> .	Both ann. Aug-18, plastic imp. Aug-18, e-waste within 2 years.	Plastic	26,900 (2,200/mth)	1,100	Apparent impact evident. Government announcement available in Thai only.
Vietnam	Tighter controls over imports of plastic, paper and metals. Only accepted if importers can prove that their shipment meets the specified environmental standards and there is capacity in the country to process the materials <sup>7</sup> . No new licences issued for waste imports <sup>8</sup> .  Under the new national standard QCVN 32: 2019/BTNMT, import of e-waste plastics such as cases of TVs, computers, office equipment would be forbidden <sup>9</sup> .	Ann. in Aug-18, appears to be implemented.	Plastic, paper, metals	603,000 (50,300/mth)	103,400	No impact apparent. Environmental standards used to determine when shipments are acceptable or when the ban on e-waste plastic imports would take effect unavailable in English.

Sources:

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