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Waste

Waste was responsible for 2% of Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions in 2020.

Greenhouse gas emissions generated by waste come from:

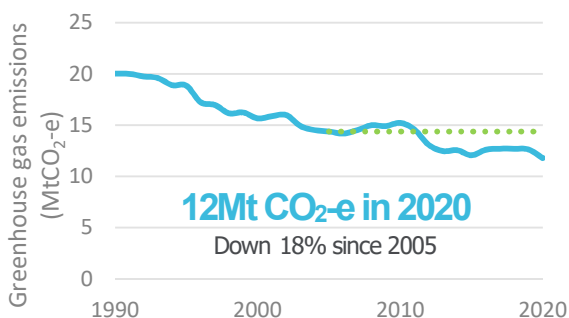
- organic matter (like food waste) decaying in landfills
- processing and treatment of wastewater.

Decaying organic matter produces methane, which is a more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.



Source: SRIP Circular Economy

Australia’s waste emissions



The circular economy

In a circular economy, resources are used for as long as possible and recycled at the end of their life.

A circular economy helps reduce emissions by:

- reducing waste and reducing emissions from landfill
- reducing emissions from creating new products and extracting more resources.

Reducing, reusing and recycling are important parts of the circular economy.

Recycling saves emissions

Recycling products generally uses less energy (leading to less emissions) than making new products.

Energy saved by recycling compared to making new products can be:

- Aluminium - 95%
- Steel - 75%
- Glass - 75%
- Plastics - 88%
- Paper -50%

The 2018 National Waste Policy guides collective action by governments, business, communities and individuals on managing waste in a circular economy.

See our report [Prospering in a low-emissions world](#).