

## Assessment of waste exports from Australia in December 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.

### Summary

In December 2018, Australia exported about 406,900 tonnes of waste with a value of \$A585 million. This represents increases of 8% in the quantity and 16% in value of waste exports compared with November 2018. It was the highest monthly total since March 2018.

### Comparison by destination

The six countries receiving the most waste exports from Australia in December 2018 accounted for 80% of all that was exported. These countries were, in order, Vietnam, Indonesia, China (including Hong Kong and Macau), India, Malaysia and Japan. The first five were also the highest ranked in November 2018, and in the same order. Japan moved from 17<sup>th</sup> place to sixth place, having received a 21,000 tonne shipment of 'sawdust and wood waste and scrap, in the form of pellets'.

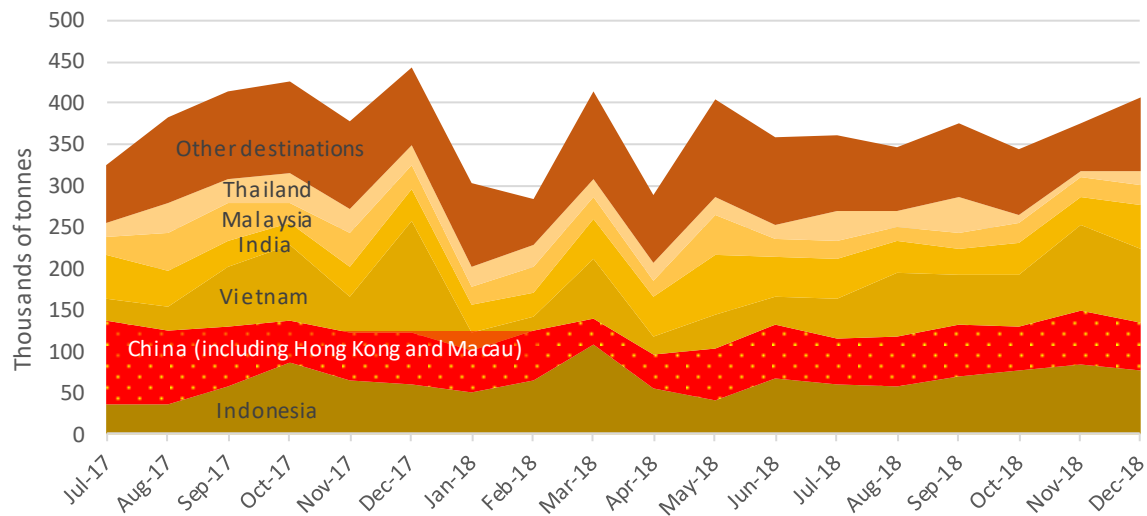
Table 1 compares the top six receiving countries in December 2018 with their November 2018 volumes and 2017-18 monthly average. The top six mostly received more waste their monthly 2017-18 average. The exceptions were China (3,600 tonnes or 6% less) and Malaysia (5,800 tonnes or 19% less). Vietnam, Indonesia and China received less waste in December 2018 than the previous month. India received an additional 19,300 tonnes (57%), Malaysia 1,600 tonnes (7%) and Japan 21,000 (1545%).

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

Export destination by monthly rank		December 18		November 18		2017-18	%
		Tonnes	% of total	Rank	Tonnes	% change	monthly avg
1	Vietnam	88,700	22%	1	102,900	-14%	50,300
2	Indonesia	76,700	19%	2	84,500	-9%	60,600
3	China	58,500	14%	3	64,800	-10%	62,100
4	India	52,800	13%	4	33,500	57%	42,400
5	Malaysia	25,400	6%	5	23,700	7%	31,200
6	Japan	22,300	5%	17	1,400	1545%	2,900
Top 6 total		324,400	80%		310,900	4%	
Monthly total		406,900	-		376,900	8%	

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 December 2018. Examined over this timeframe, the top six includes Thailand but not Japan. Exports to China have remained relatively stable since May 2018. During this same period, exports to the other countries in the top 6 grew by 16% and overall exports grew by 2%.

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



### Comparison by material

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

**Month to month** – December 2018 saw increased exports of metals (4%), hazardous waste (166%) and ‘other’ (12%) compared with November. Exports of plastics declined by 8%, and paper & cardboard by 2%. The large increase in exports of hazardous waste is representative of a trend which experiences sharp spikes (as seen in July and September 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 December 2018 was greater than the monthly average for 2017-18 but exports of paper and cardboard, hazardous waste and ‘other’ were below their 2017-18 average. Overall, December 2018 total exports of waste were slightly higher (10%) than the monthly average for 2017-18.

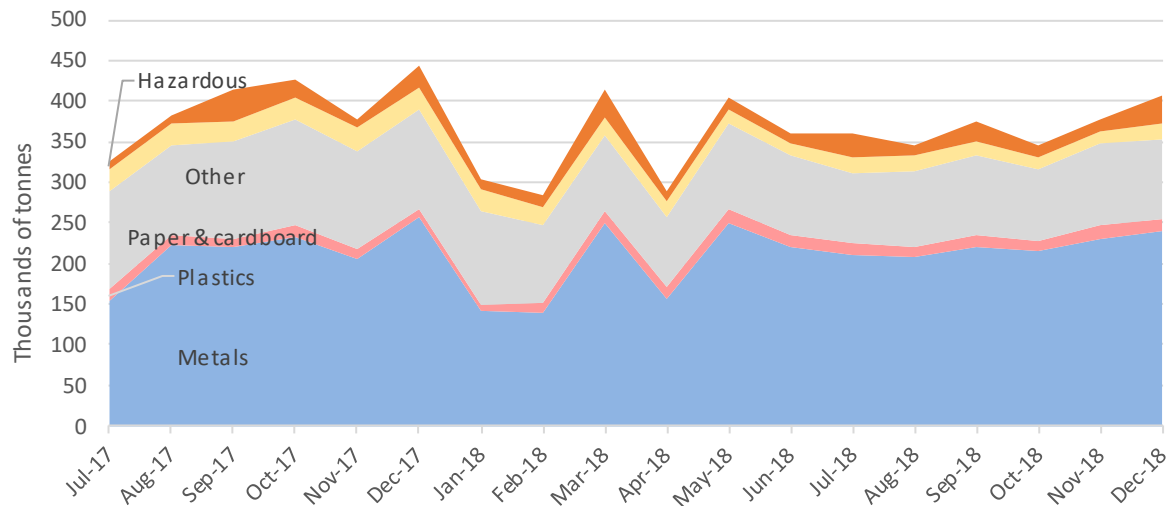
**Year to date** – The total year-to-date waste exports in December 2018 were about 2.21 million tonnes, compared with 2.37 million tonnes in the equivalent period last financial year (7% less).

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

Material category	Month		% change	Monthly		Year to date (Jul-Dec)		% change
	Nov 18	Dec 18		avg 2017-18	% change	2017-18	2018-19	
Metals	230,700	239,900	4%	203,800	18%	1,289,500	1,327,000	3%
Plastics	16,100	14,800	-8%	13,200	12%	77,500	84,700	9%
Paper & cardboard	100,900	99,100	-2%	109,800	-10%	724,200	562,600	-22%
Other	16,000	17,900	12%	23,800	-25%	160,900	106,400	-34%
Hazardous	13,200	35,200	166%	17,900	96%	116,200	131,000	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>376,900</b>	<b>406,900</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>368,500</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>2,368,500</b>	<b>2,211,700</b>	<b>-7%</b>

Figure 2 (overleaf) presents the monthly trend in exports of waste from Australia by material type between July 2017 and December 2018. Monthly exports in all categories have remained steady this financial year relative to the volatility of 2017-18.

**Figure 2** Monthly exports of waste from Australia by material type, July 2017 – December 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	Export volumes		Impact and uncertainties
				2017-18	Dec 18	
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)  16-17 = 1.26 Mt (105,300/mth)	58,500	Impact evident. Uncertainty whether newer announcements override older ones.  Total tonnes exported in the last six months affected by 2018 banned codes = 42,000 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> . Import of non-recyclable plastic waste to be banned <sup>4</sup> .	Jul-18.	Plastic	71,300 (5,900/mth)	2,900	No impact apparent
Thailand	Revoked a broad plastic scrap import allowance, meaning plastic waste and	Both ann. Aug-18, plastic imp. Aug-18,	Plastic	26,900 (2,200/mth)	1,700	Apparent impact evident. Government

Country	Scope of ban	Announced & implemented	Associated export volumes Material	Associated export volumes		Impact and uncertainties
				2017-18	Dec 18	
	scrap is banned from import by 2021 <sup>5,6,7</sup> . Looking to ban imports of e-waste within 2 years <sup>5</sup> .	e-waste within 2 years.				announcement available in Thai only.
Vietnam	<p>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>8</sup>. No new licences issued for waste imports<sup>9</sup>.</p> <p>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>10</sup>.</p> <p>From 22 February 2019, all imports through road and railway border gates to be banned<sup>11</sup>.</p>	Ann. in Aug-18, appears to be implemented.	Plastic, paper, metals	603,000 (50,300/mth)	88,700	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.

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