RESIDENT GUIDE · CHECKED NOVEMBER 2026

What to do with an old toothbrush

Toothbrushes are small and made of several materials stuck together, so most of them can't go in the recycling bin. Here's where each kind goes, and what changed when the free recycling program closed.

GENERAL WASTE BIN

Plastic toothbrush

Put it in the general waste bin, not the yellow recycling bin. It's too small for the sorting machines, and the handle, bristles and grip are different plastics fused together, so it can't be recycled kerbside.

E-WASTE DROP-OFF

Electric toothbrush

The handle has a battery, so it never goes in a bin. Take it to an e-waste or battery drop-off point.

Used brush heads go in general waste, unless you pay for a recycling service (below).

COMPOST, AFTER ONE STEP

Bamboo toothbrush

Most bamboo toothbrushes have **nylon bristles, which are plastic**. The handle can be composted, but only once the bristles are out:

1. Grip one tuft of bristles at the base with needle-nose pliers.
2. Pull it straight out. A small metal staple usually comes out with it.
3. Repeat for every tuft. Bristles and staples go in general waste.
4. Put the bare handle in your home compost.

Check the pack: if it says nylon, "plant-based" or castor oil, the bristles are plastic. If it doesn't say, ask the seller, and keep them out of the compost until you know.

CHANGED IN 2025 AND 2026

The free toothbrush recycling program has closed

The free Colgate and TerraCycle oral care program closed to the public in August 2025. Dental clinics still registered as drop-off points can send their last boxes until 30 December 2026. After that, we know of no free national route.

The options we know of are paid: TerraCycle's Oral Care Zero Waste Box and Banish's BRAD collection. Your council may also run its own collection.

Sources and current prices: thebarebrush.com.au/guides/can-you-recycle-a-plastic-toothbrush-australia
Editable text for your website: thebarebrush.com.au/resources/old-toothbrush-handout
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