



Charitable Recycling Australia Clothing Reuse Export Accreditation Scheme

Guide and Handbook

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<p>The policies, procedures and standard practices described in this manual are not legally binding conditions. Charitable Recycling Australia reserves the right to terminate any second-hand clothing export accreditation, at any time.</p> <p>I understand that the information in this handbook represents guidelines only. Charitable Recycling Australia reserves the right to modify this handbook, amend or terminate any policies or procedure.</p>	

1 Introduction

Charitable Recycling Australia has established the Clothing Reuse Export Accreditation Scheme (the Scheme) to help raise standards, accountability and transparency with respect to the export of used clothing from Australia.

Used clothing is donated by consumers to charities and private companies when the consumer no longer wants or needs it, and with the intention that it can be reused and worn by someone else.

Charities and others sort and then sell some of the used clothing locally, but a portion of the used clothing collected in Australia is not able to be sold in country and so is exported.

This process generates significant environmental, social and economic benefits in Australia and elsewhere.

The Scheme has been established as a consistent, objective, realistic and practical accreditation process to provide a standard for charitable recycling exporting activities in Australia, and specifically the export of second-hand clothing.

The Scheme is fundamentally to give confidence to consumers and others that the clothes being donated to charities are being managed in a responsible way.

The application, assessment and monitoring program the Scheme enables means that participating parties are being checked to see whether used clothes are being exported or provided to a third party in an environmentally and socially appropriate manner, and that there are objective checks and balances to show that.

This handbook provides participants and prospective participants with the relevant resources and information to become and remain accredited under the Clothing Reuse Export Accreditation Scheme.

This handbook sets out the processes that apply to Charitable Recycling Australia audits, assessment of accreditation and compliance, and consequences of non-compliance. It ensures transparency in relation to Charitable Recycling Australia's second-hand clothing export accreditations and explains the requirements of participants of the scheme.

1.1 Background and Context

Charitable Recycling Australia established the Scheme in 2022.

The Scheme has been established to grow and develop over time, and for the requirements on participants and accredited parties to evolve and ensure such requirements and are relevant, objective and appropriate.

As such Charitable Recycling Australia in 2024 has enhanced the requirements of the program.

Applicants and participants are required to provide more detailed information and supporting evidence on their activities. This includes being able to show that organisations have taken steps to inform themselves of where any used clothing they manage ends up, and that they know the environmental, social and other impacts of the whole of lifecycle management of that used clothing.

1.1.1 Purpose and Objectives

The Scheme seeks to provide clear and straightforward parameters for members to follow.

Accreditation is intended to be achieved by meeting and committing to specific requirements and procedures which are outlined in this handbook. When accredited, charitable recyclers and other service providers will be recognised as completing best practice export activities.

The purpose of this accreditation scheme is to:

- Accredit and assure charitable recyclers export activities
- Accredit individual organisations to an agreed standard
- Not seek to validate a supply chain and final destination
- Build and grow in the long term
- Be easily understood and implemented by participants of the scheme

1.1.2 Benefits of Participation

The following benefits may be applicable to participants of the scheme:

- Recognition of quality export activities
- Public recognition of participants completing best practice export activities
- Shareable certifications and endorsements
- Recognised standards and guidelines for export practices
- Support and guidance from Charitable Recycling Australia

1.1.3 Participants

Accreditation is available to any party involved with exporting second-hand clothing from Australia to any overseas destination. See the following for eligible participants and definitions.

Potential Participant	Description
Charities	Any Australian charitable organisation that sells, provides or otherwise distributes recovered or second-hand clothing to an overseas destination.
Brokers / Third Parties	Any party that acts as an intermediary between an Australian second-hand clothing provider and an overseas second-hand clothing receiver.
Second-hand Clothing Exporters	Any party that purchases second-hand clothing in Australia to send, sell or otherwise distribute for re-use or recycling overseas.

2 Scheme Structure

The below outlines the process to become accredited under the scheme.

2.1 Process of Accreditation

1. Party initiates interest in becoming accredited and completes the application
2. Information request, checklist and handbook shared with potential participant
3. Checklist and signed handbook is submitted by potential participant for approval
4. Evidence is reviewed and assessed by Charitable Recycling Australia or third party
5. Site visit and audit is discussed, arranged and conducted
6. Recommendation to accredit or not
7. Charitable Recycling Australia provides accreditation kit to participant
8. On-going reporting requirements
9. Participant practices, activities, and evidence to be re-evaluated annually

2.2 Requirements of Participants

Participants must comply with the following requirements to be accredited and remain accredited under the scheme:

- Signed document of understanding between Charitable Recycling Australia and the service provider
- Completion of relevant information request and checklist
- Transparency regarding export practices
- Support for and participation in site visit and audit
- Sharing of relevant documents during site visit and audit activities
- Pay fee as applicable

Charitable Recycling Australia will review the scope of accreditation and compliance audits on a regular basis and will make changes as required, based on:

- Participant feedback
- Profile of Participants
- Alignment with objectives of the scheme

3 Accreditation and Governance

Governance mechanisms will be maintained by Charitable Recycling Australia to ensure duties are outlined for both the scheme managers and participants.

Charitable Recycling Australia will provide the following to the participants:

- Details of the decision-making processes
- A set of processes for information dissemination and communication
- Mechanisms for managing and resolving any issues during scheme's operation

The scheme structure is intended to be governed and facilitated by the following deliverables from participants:

- A signed document of understanding between Charitable Recycling Australia and the service provider
- Commitment and compliance to participant guidelines which will include:
 - A universal code of conduct for all third-party groups
 - Basic knowledge on the topic of the export of second-hand clothing (including up to date regulation and compliance)

3.1 Document Control

Documentation will be managed via a document management system, which will be implemented by Charitable Recycling Australia.

It is recommended that participants keep and maintain records of the documents that they submit to Charitable Recycling Australia as part of the accreditation process. The following provides a guide of which records to keep and how to manage them:

Site inspection and auditing program

Charitable Recycling Australia has developed and will oversee a site inspection and auditing program as part of the Scheme.

The purpose of the site inspection and auditing program is to:

- Enhance the accountability and transparency of the Scheme and participants
- Extend information gathering, knowledge and insights on used clothing handling and processing
- Provide evidence of current practices

A separate documented Site Inspection and Auditing Protocol has been developed. This will be provided to organisations and sites prior to any visits or audits.

The site visit and auditing program works locally and internationally.

Locally the program will check a random sample of organisations and sites at the time of application for accreditation, or during annual reaccreditation.

Internationally Charitable Recycling Australia is initially relying on charities and services providers to provide details of any site inspections or audits they have undertaken (whether remotely or physically, and by themselves or through third parties). Further an

on-going international auditing program is under development and expected to be implemented in 2025.

Domestic site inspection and audits

Applicants must agree to being part of a site visit and audit as required under the assessment process.

As noted, Charitable Recycling Australia has documented a separate Site Inspection and Auditing Protocol that sets out in detail how the site visit is to be scheduled, conducted, completed and recorded.

The site inspection and audits compliment the desk top assessment and provide an opportunity to further display that the applicant is operating in accordance with the objectives of the program as stated above.

The domestic site inspection and audit process required the applicant to do the following:

- Support and participate in the process
- Identify main sites where used clothing is received, aggregated, sorted or otherwise handled and processed by the applicant organisation
- Schedule the site visit to be held within four weeks of the request from Charitable Recycling Australia and or the auditor
- Allowing auditors open access to requests to interview employees, view all areas of a site, and view records and documents

It is expected that applicants will treat auditors with respect, courtesy and professionalism at all times and recognise that the auditor is working on behalf of and for the benefit of Charitable Recycling Australia and the applicant.

Record keeping

Participants and accredited parties are expected to keep relevant and timely records and provide them to Charitable Recycling Australian upon request. These include for example:

- Any documents requested and provided in accordance with the information request and checklist
- Any references or other supporting documents
- Any relevant downstream provider contact details (business name, contact name, email, contact number, address)
- Any supporting documentation or evidence provided by downstream providers
- Notes and any other relevant information deemed pertinent by the charitable recycler

3.2 Non-compliance

Charitable Recycling Australia reserves the right to terminate any second-hand clothing export accreditation at any time if a participant is found to be non-compliant with the scheme requirements as laid out in this handbook.

4 Contact

If you have any questions or require any further details please contact:

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