

Soft Landing



The Spark

Every year, according to the Australian Bedding Stewardship Council (ABSC), 1.8 million mattresses are disposed of in Australia, with around 740,000 mattresses (22,000 tonnes) ending up in landfill. Mattresses are made from multiple materials, including textiles, metal springs, latex, and foam, which require careful separation to recycle effectively.

When mattresses are sent to landfill, they take up significant space, pose fire hazards, and contain chemicals of concern, such as flame retardants. They can also damage landfill machinery and release shredded particles into the air, causing further environmental harm.

Soft Landing provides a better solution and addresses two growing challenges: the environmental problem of discarded mattresses and the opportunity to create stable and meaningful jobs for people facing barriers to employment. Through its manual mattress recycling process, up to 100% of mattress materials are recovered for recycling, contributing to the circular economy and reducing the environmental impacts of landfill disposal.

Soft Landing believes recycling should do more than protect the planet – it should empower people. For every 23 mattresses collected and recycled each day, Soft Landing creates a job for someone who really needs one.

Governance Model

Soft Landing is part of Community Resources, a national not-for-profit organisation in Australia focused on creating jobs that care for people and the planet. As a registered charity, Soft Landing operates with the support of Community Resources' governance framework, which includes an experienced board of directors and senior leadership team. This governance ensures financial sustainability, compliance, and alignment with the organisation's mission.

Through various certifications, Soft Landing is committed to measurable social impact and sustainable practices, including its role as a Certified Social Traders social enterprise, an Approved Recycler with the Australian Bedding Stewardship Council (ABSC), and a member of the Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR).

Soft Landing has a collaborative approach by working with local governments, retailers, and residents to provide various mattress collection and recycling services, such as curbside collection programs, central depot collection, collecting old customer mattresses from retailers, and taking direct bookings for mattress collections.

This model reflects Soft Landing's dedication to environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

Social Benefits

Soft Landing focuses on creating employment opportunities for people experiencing barriers to work, including former refugees, people who have been in contact with the justice system, and individuals experiencing long-term unemployment.

Manual recycling methods are chosen to maximise job creation. Soft Landing actively supports team members to gain valuable skills, such as forklift and truck licenses, that set them up for future employment within the organisation or in external roles.

Impact (2023–2024)¹

288

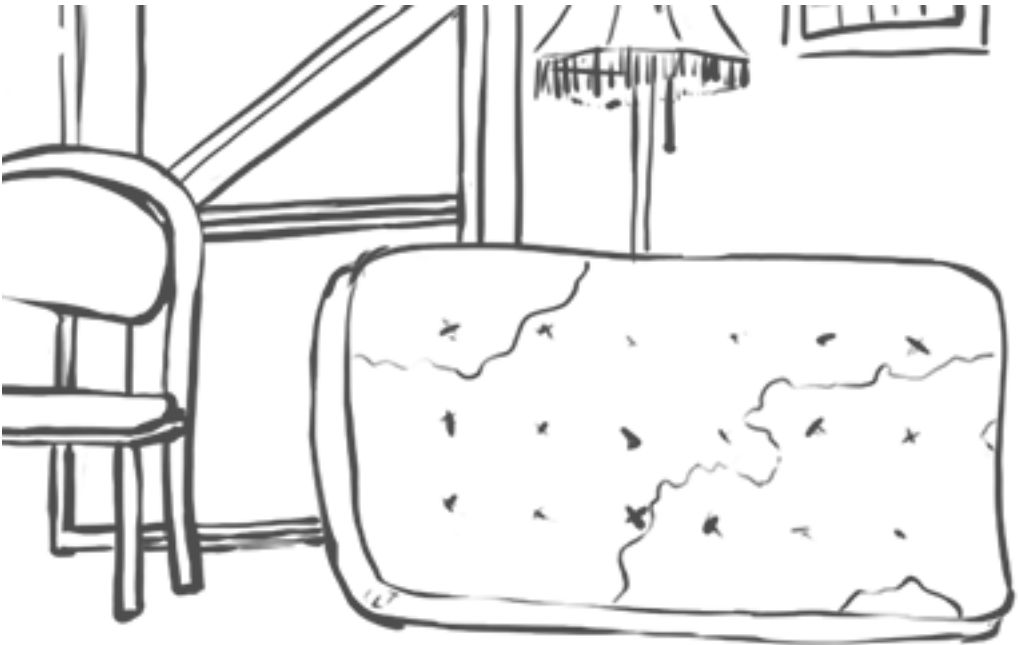
Employment opportunities created.

2,084

Training and development outcomes achieved.

76%

of the workforce comprises people who have experienced barriers to employment.





In 2023-2024, Soft Landing recycled¹

433,371

Mattresses

5,190

Tonnes of Steel

1,585

Tonnes of Foam

750

Tonnes of Timber

Environmental Benefits

Soft Landing maximises resource recovery to reduce landfill waste and promote the circular economy:

- Steel springs enter the scrap steel market and are used in the manufacture of new steel.
- Foam is recycled into floor underlay.
- Timber from bed bases is reused in the manufacture of new bed bases, mulched, processed into engineered timber, or diverted to waste-to-energy recovery.
- Textiles will soon be diverted to waste-to-energy recovery. While this process ensures landfill diversion, Soft Landing continues to seek higher-value recovery options.

Soft Landing's manual recycling process ensures greater material recovery compared to mechanical shredding methods, while using less energy and reducing environmental impact.

Replicability Potential

Soft Landing's model is scalable and replicable, offering a proven solution to both environmental and social challenges. By collaborating with councils, retailers, and communities, Soft Landing has successfully expanded operations nationally across New South Wales, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, and Western Australia.

The use of manual recycling methods ensures high-quality material recovery, while the focus on creating employment opportunities for people facing barriers to work highlights its broader social impact. With the right policy frameworks, partnerships, and investment, this model can be adapted to other regions and industries, demonstrating the potential for scalable circular economy solutions that deliver measurable environmental, social, and economic outcomes.



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Sources:

- <https://softlanding.com.au/about/>
- ¹ Community Resources 2024. FY24 Annual Report, <https://ourimpact.org.au/>



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