

REDUCE WASTE!

A Guide to Reducing
Your Household Waste



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INTRODUCTION

Australia is one of the richest countries in the world. It is also one of the most wasteful. Given our actions have consequences, not only for ourselves, but for the rest of the world, we have a responsibility to change our behaviour.



MY CHALLENGE

I led my family in a challenge to reduce our household waste. Over a two week period, we went from 1.45kg of rubbish to just 0.15kg. I have compiled the most helpful waste reducing tips in this booklet, so that others too can make a change. The more households that take on this challenge, the bigger the difference we can make!

BEFORE



AFTER



WASTE IN AUSTRALIA



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Australia produces approximately 64 millions tons of waste every year.

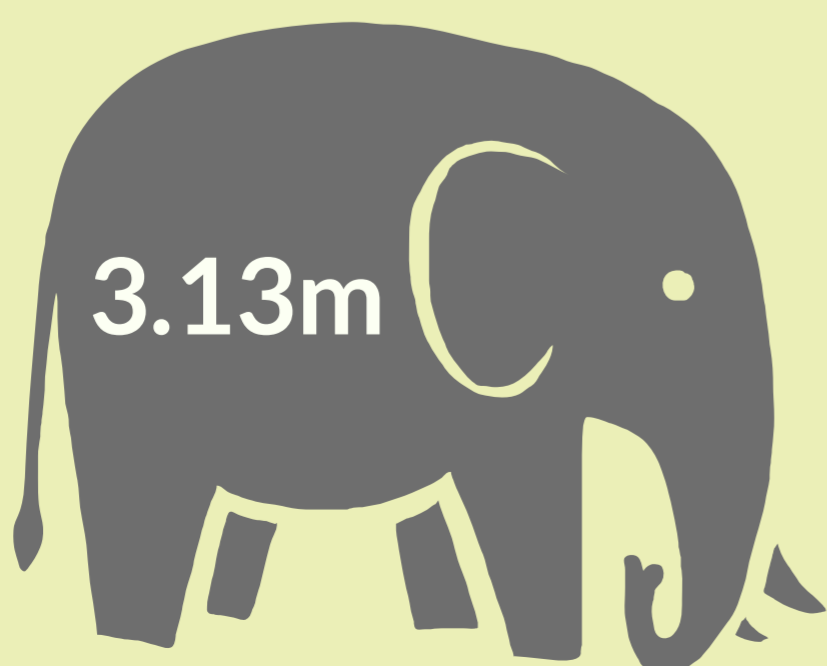


This means that the average person produces 2.7 tons of waste.



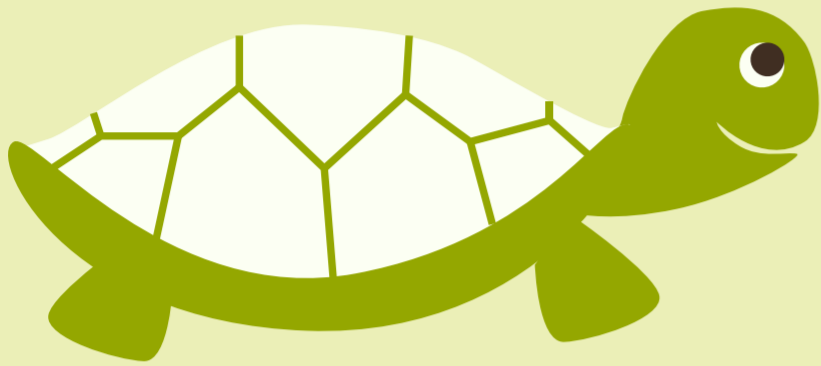
40% of household waste is food waste.

The average family throws out \$3,500 worth of food each year.



Every year, 20 million tons of rubbish is sent to landfill. The equivalent of 3,125,000 elephants.

THE IMPACTS



Waste released into the environment kills animals that mistake it for food.



The toxins from landfills contaminate nearby soil and water, impacting the whole ecosystem.



Decomposing organic material in landfills creates methane gas, a significant contributor to climate change.



More waste needs more space for landfill, resulting in the destruction of more ecosystems.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Waste reduction involves three parts, reduce, reuse, recycle. Reduce is the most important, because it avoids the costs of waste before it is actually produced.



REDUCE



REUSE



RECYCLE



HOW DO YOU START?

To get started, monitor the amount and type of waste your household produces in one week. This will help you to get a good understanding of your household waste.



Seeing how much is produced will help maintain your motivation. It will also make it easier to decide which changes to make. You should aim to make as many as possible, even if it is not all at once.

REDUCE

1 Stop using disposables

1

Avoid items such as glad wrap, baking paper, plastic bottles & plastic straws as much as possible.



2 Start using reusables

2

Find replacements for the disposables that cannot be eliminated altogether. These should be reusable, rather than single use.

Helpful Links:

<https://www.floraandfauna.com.au/living/>

<https://www.biome.com.au/274-lunch-boxes>

<https://au.keepcup.com/stockists?country=Australia>

<https://www.onyalife.com>

3

Buy from bulk food shops

Bulk food shops sell products in large containers. The food can be collected in smaller containers, such as jars, which means there is no packaging involved.



Find a store near you:

<https://zerowastehome.com/app/>

Helpful Link:

http://www.mackay.qld.gov.au/environment/environmental-sustainability/sustainability_living_guide/products/avoid_products_with_excessive_packaging

4

Take your own bags

Take reusable bags when you go shopping to avoid single use plastic bags. This includes shopping, bread & produce bags.



Helpful Links:

<https://www.hellogreen.com.au/collections/reusable-shopping-bags>

<https://www.onyalife.com/product/reusable-bread-bag/>

<https://www.onyalife.com/product/reusable-bread-bag/>

<https://www.floraandfauna.com.au/reusable-bags/>

Reusable shopping bags can also be found in supermarkets, such as Woolworths and Coles.

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Make waste free food

When no waste free options are available for purchase, try to make your own food. This is a good option for muesli bars and biscuits, which are easy to make yourself.



6

Minimise packaging

When waste free options are not possible, buy products that have the least amount of packaging and use the most environmentally friendly material. This means that it is either recyclable or biodegradable. For example, choose paper over plastic packaging.



7

Keep track of your food

Be aware of the food in your fridge and pantry. Attempt to use what you already have, before you buy more, so that no food goes to waste.



8

Minimise your usage of products

Think about how much of a product you really need to use. For example, do not use multiple paper towel sheets if you can manage with one.



9

Borrow instead of buying

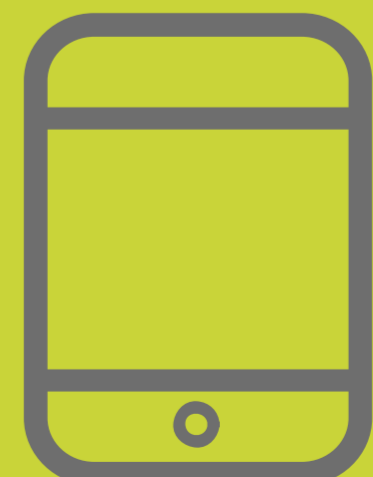
Instead of buying, borrow items that you might not use often from friends, family and neighbours. Return the favour by sharing with them.



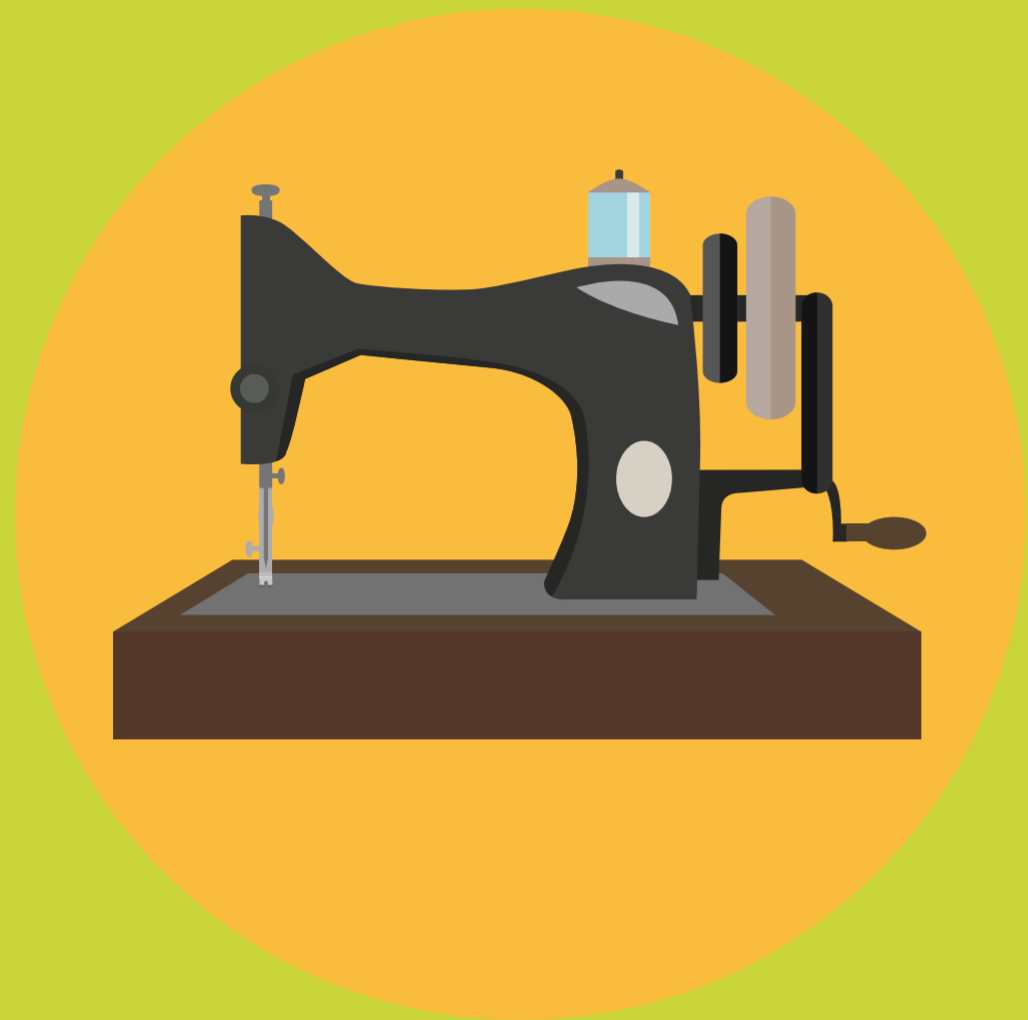
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Go digital

Sign up to receive your mail online, instead of hardcopy. There is often information on envelopes telling you how to do this.



REUSE



TIP #01

Fix broken items and clothing, rather than throwing them in the bin.

TIP #02

Repurpose items. For example, empty jam jars make good storage containers.



TIP #03

Donate or sell unwanted items, rather than bin them, so that others can reuse them.



TIP #02

INSPIRATION







RECYCLE



RECYCLE

- Use a recycling bin rather than sending all of your waste to landfill.
- **Recycling guide:** https://www.act.gov.au/recycling/a-z_waste_and_recycling_guide

REDCYCLE

- Place soft plastics into the REDcycle bins outside of Coles (so that they can be made into products, such as chairs).
- **What to REDcycle:**
<http://www.redcycle.net.au/what-to-redcycle/>
- **Where to REDcycle:**
<http://www.redcycle.net.au/where-to-redcycle/>

COMPOST

- Create a compost or worm farm to stop sending organic waste to landfill.
- If you do not have the capacity for a compost, see if your neighbours have one.
- **What to put in a compost:**
<https://www.smallfootprintfamily.com/100-things-you-can-compost>
- **How to choose the right type of compost:**
<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/types-composting-and-understanding-process>



FIND OUT MORE



For more information on Australia's waste problem, visit:

- <https://theconversation.com/explainer-how-much-landfill-does-australia-have-78404>
- <https://www.ozharvest.org/fightfoodwaste/foodwasteinfographic/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/may/16/change-behaviour-and-the-law-craig-reucassel-gives-rubbish-a-dirty-look>
- https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsPVOdZ3LN6eoCyb_TvRjx13CWhZwIWYn

For more information on the harms of waste, visit:

- <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/07/plastic-produced-recycling-waste-ocean-trash-debris-environment/>

- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jun/28/a-million-a-minute-worlds-plastic-bottle-binge-as-dangerous-as-climate-change>
- <https://www.cabonne.nsw.gov.au/sites/cabonne/files/public/images/documents/cabonne/environment/4.%20Impacts%20of%20Waste%20on%20the%20Environment.pdf>

For more information on how to reduce your waste, visit:

- https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/waste/minimisation/reduce_reuse_recycle.html#re_use
- Bea Johnson's 'Zero Waste Home' book
- <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-20/war-on-waste-living-a-plastic-free-life-is-it-possible/8522674>
- <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/services/regional-services/waste-hazardous-substances-and-contaminated-sites/solid-waste/reducing-waste/reducing-household-waste/>

REMEMBER

Change does not have to happen straight away or become overwhelming. You can keep making little changes overtime.

Be creative! Keep thinking of new ways to reduce your waste.

Feel free to share this booklet with others!

