



# Household tips for a healthier environment

*You can help to prevent pollution, conserve natural resources and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by aiming to reduce, reuse and recycle around the home.*

## Shopping tips

- *Take your own bags or basket shopping.*
- *Buy fresh food and fruit loose.*
- *Purchase reusable, long-life and rechargeable items. Avoid buying disposable, single-use products such as disposable nappies and plastic plates.*
- *Rent or borrow equipment you may only use a few times, such as trailers, ladders and power tools, or buy them second hand. You will save money and reduce the amount of rubbish created.*
- *To reduce packaging, buy in bulk and purchase long-life goods or buy concentrated products.*
- *Buy products with recycled packaging and avoid excess packaging. Do without products that are sold inside more than one layer.*
- *Choose the container that can be most easily recycled.*
- *Let grocers, store owners, restaurant managers and manufacturers know that you are making buying decisions based on the environmental impact of products.*

## What you can do to help

There are a number of things you can do in your home and garden each day to help save energy and water, prevent pollution, conserve natural resources and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

### Reduce

The first step in becoming more environmentally friendly is to reduce the amount of waste created in the home. You can do this in many ways.

Avoid using plastic bags. Don't use a bin liner at all – simply put rubbish straight into your bin. Use pillowcases, boxes, or a sheet to transport items. Use plastic containers to pack sandwiches and biscuits rather than plastic cling film. Try to avoid wasting food. Rehydrate wilted vegetables by cutting off some stalk and standing them in water.

Reduce waste in the garden by planting natives, which require less raking and pruning.

### Reuse

Reusing items instead of throwing them away and buying new items will help to reduce the amount of waste created in the home.

Reuse cooking oil and put food scraps in a blender to use as a liquid fertilizer. Reuse containers, jars and bottles as much as possible.

In the garden create a compost heap or worm farm for organic waste as well as cotton, canvas, newspaper and cardboard. Reuse lawn clippings as mulch and plant your Christmas tree after Christmas.

### Recycle

Throughout Australia, most local councils have kerbside collection programs and collection depots. Councils differ on what they will and will not collect for recycling so, if unsure, ask your council what can be recycled in your area.

You can make recycling easier in your home by placing cardboard boxes around the house to use as recycling bins. You can also help by recycling plastic bags at your local supermarket and buying products that are made from recycled paper or cardboard.

### Avoid using chemicals

Chemicals are used in the home for many different purposes but they can be both harmful to the environment and your health. Many people aren't aware that they can use natural alternatives to chemicals for cleaning, gardening, health and hygiene.

In the garden you can use natural pesticides, such as coffee grounds and chilli powder, to deter ants. It can also help to keep fly screens in good repair. In the home, buy unbleached or plain white toilet paper, tissues and paper towels - preferably made from recycled paper. Dyes contain hazardous chemicals and bleach harms the environment.

If you do use chemicals in the home, make sure they are disposed of properly. For more information, call the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation on **1300 787 870** or visit [www.cleanout.com.au](http://www.cleanout.com.au).

*Clean up - inspiring and working with all Australians to clean up, fix up and conserve our environment.*

# Saving energy and water at home

*The average Australian household produces more than eight tonnes of greenhouse gases each year. By minimising the amount of energy and water used in your home, you can save money and help to prevent climate change.*

## Be Energy Efficient

Households use a third of Australia's electricity and the average household spends up to \$1500 on energy bills each year. This energy use directly contributes to climate change, with the average Australian household producing more than 8 tonnes of greenhouse gases each year.<sup>1</sup> Using the energy efficiency tips outlined in this guide can help you conserve energy, save money and look after the environment.

## Heating and Cooling

Insulation can reduce your heating and cooling costs by up to 40%. Reverse-cycle air conditioning is an energy efficient way of both heating and cooling your home. Close off any rooms that aren't occupied as they're expensive to heat or cool.

## Gas Heating

Natural gas heating provides instant warmth with no warm-up phase, making it efficient. To save on your heating costs choose the right size gas heater for the area you are trying to heat. Gas heaters are cheaper to run and produce lower greenhouse gas emissions than electric heaters.

## Water

In a typical home, heating water accounts for about one third of energy consumed. You can help reduce this by fixing leaky taps - a dripping tap can waste hundreds of litres of water every month. Likewise, a leaking pressure relief valve (on the side of the hot water tank) can also waste a lot of water. Fit a AAA-rated Energy Smart showerhead. Today's modern efficient showerheads give you a great shower and can save you up to \$100 every year on your energy and water bills. Finally, turn the power to your hot water system off if going away for long periods.

## Gas Hot Water

Natural gas water heaters produce around 65% less greenhouse emissions. They also carry labels to identify their energy efficiency, helping you to be energy-smart.

## In the kitchen...

Top star rated appliances use considerably less energy and water. Small appliances like a toaster or microwave use less energy than grilling in the oven or cooking on the stove. Fan-forced ovens generate up to 35% less greenhouse gas than conventional ovens and more items can be cooked at the same time, as the heat is more evenly distributed.<sup>4</sup>

Fill your dishwashers to capacity. Partial loads use the same amount of electricity and water as a full load. An economy cycle uses up to one third less energy. Old fridges can use twice as much energy as modern ones. A rarely used second fridge can cost more than \$100 to run each year.

## In the laundry...

Use cold settings on your washing machine to cut down on energy used to heat water and adjust the wash cycle to match the load. Front-loading automatic washing machines use less energy and water than top-loading automatics. Keep the lint filter in your dryer clean - a dirty lint filter will mean clothes take much longer to dry.

## In general...

Use Energy Smart compact fluorescent lights wherever possible as they use about 20% of the electricity of standard bulbs to produce the same amount of light. Whilst they cost more, they also last up to eight times longer. Turn your appliances off at the power point - leaving appliances on stand-by uses a constant supply of energy.



## References

<sup>1</sup>Sustainable Energy Authority Victoria & SEDA  
[www.greenhousegases.gov.au](http://www.greenhousegases.gov.au)

<sup>2</sup>Reduce.org  
[www.moea.state.mn.us/campaign/](http://www.moea.state.mn.us/campaign/)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Greenhouse Office  
[www.greenhouse.gov.au](http://www.greenhouse.gov.au)

<sup>4</sup> Tampa Estuary Program  
<http://www.tbep.org/help.html>

<sup>5</sup> Resource NSW  
[www.cleanout.com.au](http://www.cleanout.com.au)



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