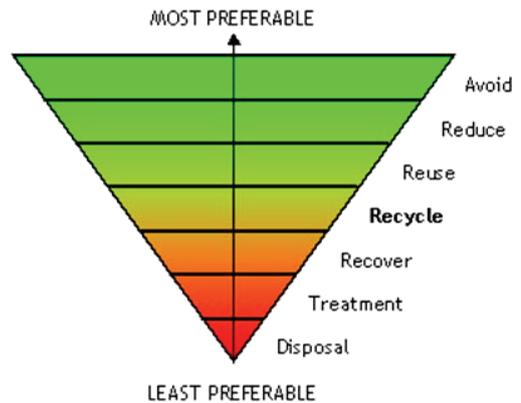


Fact Sheet #3 : Waste not, want not: consuming less

We chop down trees to produce paper and furniture, dig holes in the ground to look for metals, drill for oil to make plastics and use a huge amount of fossil fuels to manufacture products. **And the truth is that we are running out of all these natural resources.**

Not only is our ecological footprint affected by what we actually use (see Fact Sheet #1), but everything we “throw away” is wasted resources. And that includes the materials in our recycling bins (both containers and paper) and much of our green waste.



Note: the principle of the waste hierarchy is to list, in descending order, a range of actions to deal with waste. Other interpretations of this hierarchy may use different terms to describe the same pathway and may invert the pyramid.

The Waste Hierarchy is the ranking of waste management options in order of sustainability, i.e. based on their relative environmental benefits (avoidance, reduction, re-use, recovery, disposal). While recycling is still better than disposing of things in landfill, we need to remember it does involve considerable energy use both in transport and reprocessing, so minimisation of total waste (avoid, reduce, re-use) is always best. Plus, in times of economic downturn demand for recyclable materials decreases, causing stockpiling.

For many people, the urge to earn and buy more translates into longer work hours and more stress. And that means less time to actually enjoy life with family and friends.

Watch the movie, *The Story of Stuff*, <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>

So **how can you consume less?** Perhaps we need to add “re-think” to the hierarchy. Before you buy ask yourself: Do I need it? Can I use something else? Can I borrow or hire it? Can I buy it second hand?

Can I buy it in bulk and re-use my own containers? If I have to buy it packaged, is there a brand that uses less packaging? Can I unwrap it and leave the packaging at the store (if we all did this manufacturers would eventually be forced to reduce their packaging). Very importantly, is the packaging recyclable?

Ask yourself, Is it made from oil? From lipstick to aspirin and disposable nappies to roller blades, petrochemicals (oil) play a vital part in our daily lives

(<http://www.api.org/classroom/tools/index.cfm>). It is not only **Peak Oil** (the point at which oil production begins to decline as supplies dwindle) that we need to be concerned about (most scientists believe that that point has already been reached). Many strategic mineral resources could be depleted by the year 2050.

Waste reduction is even better than recycling!



Finally, when I've finished with it, what will I do with it? Can it be re-used, by me, someone else? Can it be recycled? <http://recyclingnearyou.com.au/>

What can you do...

At home?

- ✓ Lane Cove throws “away” 19 tonnes of rubbish every day. On average, **40%** of rubbish sent to land fill is food waste! This is all food that you have bought and paid for! Use this resource by composting your food scraps or by using a worm farm. <http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/Council%20Services/Waste%20Management/Compost%20Bins%20and%20Worm%20Farms/CompostBinsandWormFarms.htm>
- ✓ Make sure you are up-to-date with what can and cannot be recycled. <http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/Council%20Services/Waste%20Management/Garbage%20and%20Recycling%20Service/Recycling.htm>
- ✓ Fridges, mobile phones, batteries and light globes all have recycling collection programs in Lane Cove <http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/Council%20Services/Waste%20Management/3%20ways%20to%20Reduce%20Waste/SmartShopping.htm>
- ✓ Council can provide information about how to safely dispose of a large range of other “wastes” (chemicals/paints, building and construction materials). For information contact the Waste Enquiry Hotline on 1300 655 006
- ✓ **NEVER buy bottled water!** Drinking one bottle of water has the same environmental impact as driving a car for a kilometre and can cost more than a litre of petrol. <http://www.bottledwateralliance.com.au>
- ✓ When buying gifts, “re-think”. Check out Lane Cove Council’s “Green Gift Guide” (it’s not just for Christmas!) <http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/Our%20Environment/Latest%20News%20and%20Events/Latest%20News/GreenChristmasTips.htm>

At work and in your community?

- ✓ Support campaigns for Container Deposit Legislation, in order to encourage return of bottles and cans (a recycled aluminium can requires 94% less energy than a can manufactured from virgin resources). <http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/258-waste-managementrecycling.asp>
- ✓ Re-use scrap paper, print reports “double-sided”, only print when absolutely necessary, always use recycled paper.
- ✓ Take your lunch to work in re-useable containers. If necessary, take your rubbish home with you so it can be properly recycled/composted.
- ✓ Think twice before providing bottled water at events you may organise. Is there an alternative? E.g. include a sponsored water bottle as part of entry material. Check to see what access to water your venue provides (e.g. taps, bubblers, etc.). Provide water jugs and re-usable glasses at meetings.

