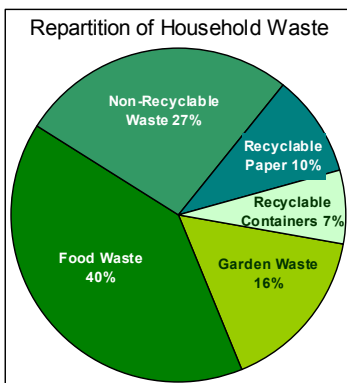


Waste

What is waste?

On average, Australian households will produce 1.14 tonne of rubbish each year ^{2!} that doesn't include industrial, building and commercial wastes produced outside the home. About 70% of this waste ends up in landfill - that's more than 800kg of waste sent to the tip from each household every year^{3!}



Why is waste a problem?

The disposal of waste in landfill has many environmental, economic and social impacts. As organic wastes breakdown in the anaerobic (without oxygen) conditions of landfill, greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide and methane) are released into the atmosphere⁴. The liquid leachate produced from landfill is highly toxic and environmentally damaging, and must be rigorously managed through a costly collection and extraction process.

Landfills have a carrying capacity! As our population grows, we will need to dispose of the increasing amounts of waste produced from modern life. New landfill sites will need to be larger to meet the increasing demands.

How can I avoid and reduce the waste I generate?

When purchasing products, ask yourself: Do I really need it? Will it last? What will happen to the product and the packaging when I am finished with them? What are my alternatives?

How can I reuse and recycle waste?

Rubbish is often sent to landfill long before the lifetime of the product, and the constituent materials, are over. There is a limited supply of resources that can be mined and extracted from the earth to create products for our consumption. Glass, plastics, cardboard, paper and metals can all be recycled through your local council. When we send these materials to landfill, we are simply throwing away and burying useful resources!



a Watershed information sheet

Top tips for waste reduction, reuse and recycling in the home:

- Aim to buy durable, quality products as much as possible that will last longer and prevent additional purchases to fix any problems.
- Consider borrowing, loaning or sharing purchases with friends and neighbours, such as lawn mowers, blenders, washing machines, or cars.
- Rent rather than buy new products.
- For presents: buy a service such as a beauty treatment, bungee jump, or remedial massage instead of a product.
- Buy locally, in bulk or grow your own to reduce packaging and transport costs and impacts.
- Organic wastes such as food scraps, plant materials, can be easily converted to nutrient rich fertiliser for the garden using compost bins and worm farms. For more information, please refer to the Watershed Info Sheet 'Worm Farming'*
- Buy products made from recycled and recyclable or reusable materials
- Buy second hand and sell or give away unwanted items
- Use natural cleaning products and alternatives to avoid household chemical wastes. See Watershed Info Sheet 'Natural Cleaning' for more Information.



Where can I find more information?

You can check with your local council for information on recycling/ reusing near you.

<http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au>



WSN (Waste Service NSW) can be contacted for information on waste disposal in NSW

<http://wasteservice.nsw.gov.au/>

For safe disposal of other chemicals and hazardous materials such as batteries, paints and car parts, please refer to the NSW Government Chemical Cleanout program.

http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/spd_chem_cleanout.htm

References

- 1-2 ABS Feature Article 4613.0 – Solid Waste in Australia 2006
- 3 NSW Department of Environment and Conservation - State of the Environment Report 2006
- 4 <http://www.waterservice.nsw.gov.au>
- 5 *Recycling Myths* – Report for National Recycling Week 2006, Planet Ark
- 6 http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/spd_chem_cleanout.htm
- 7 <http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au>

