

REDUCE

Reducing waste in simple terms means reducing our consumption and as a result throwing away less. By only using products that are really necessary, with less packaging and in appropriate amounts, we can all reduce the amount of waste we create. Waste reduction prevents the generation of waste in the first place and is a more effective method of minimising your waste than reusing or recycling.

Australians and other 'industrial' countries must consider the effects of over-consumption if the world's resources are to be more equally shared. In every action we take we should consider the 'think globally, act locally' philosophy, even for small actions such as whether to accept a plastic bag or not.

Waste reduction helps ease the environmental impacts of

landfill (less land is needed for disposal and the production of toxic waste, leachate and greenhouse gases is reduced). There is less need to use raw materials (for example, less mining and logging of forests) and the amount of fossil fuels required for energy are also reduced, minimising the release of greenhouse gases and other pollution.

You can save money by reducing your waste in many ways too. Consider the cost of refills versus buying an entire product each time. Less money spent on purchasing items used infrequently, and renting, hiring or borrowing, is money saved. The community can help reduce waste disposal and management costs by working together to reduce waste. Less waste for businesses means a direct saving in waste disposal costs.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Reducing waste is the easiest and most effective way to deal with our growing waste problem. Common ways of reducing waste include - avoid the purchase of unnecessary items, choosing products with minimum packaging (for example, buying in bulk or in a concentrated form), using durable and repairable products, composting your organic waste and making the most of products by using only as much as you need.

Do you think first before consuming? Questions to ask yourself can include:

- Do I really need this?
- Do I need to use that much?
- Can I maintain, repair or restore it?
- Is there a less wasteful alternative?
- How long will it last?
- Is it over-packaged? Can I recycle what packaging there is?
- Do I know the environmental impacts of this?

(adapted from <http://www.kesab.asn.au/earthworks/New%20Waste.htm>)

MORE INFORMATION

- www.reduce.org - A comprehensive US site on reducing waste.
- www.kesab.asn.au - A great South Australian site on all things waste.
- www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/reduce/catbook/index.htm - An educative website that includes 'The consumer's handbook to reducing waste.'