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*The Little Green Guide* is a great pocket guide to going green, identifying some key steps that will make the most difference for the least cost and effort, and putting it all into context. If you want to help save the planet but aren't quite sure how, then start here.



**PLANET ARK**

the little green guide

Mark Mann

ecoPRESS

the little  green guide

simple ways  
to save the planet

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**the little**  **green guide**  
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**PLANET ARK**

## **QUICKLIST being green**

**energy** Switch to GreenPower.  Fit energy-saving lightbulbs.  Insulate walls and ceilings and shade windows.  Turn appliances off at the wall.  Install solar hot water.  Fit a water-saving showerhead and take shorter showers.

**water** Install a water-saving showerhead, dishwasher, washing machine and taps.  Take shorter showers.  Install a dual-flush toilet or fit a water-saving device to your cistern.  Fix leaking pipes and dripping taps.  Put plugs in sinks.

**chemicals** Use natural cleaning, pest control and bodycare.  Garden organically.

**waste** Compost.  Reduce, reuse, recycle.

**food** Eat locally grown.  Eat organic.  Eat less meat.  Avoid overfished fish.

**cars** Drive less.

**shopping** Buy less.  Buy second-hand and recycled.

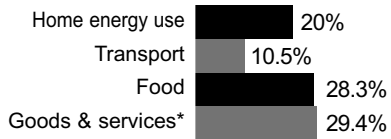
**holidays** Fly less.

**money** Invest ethically.

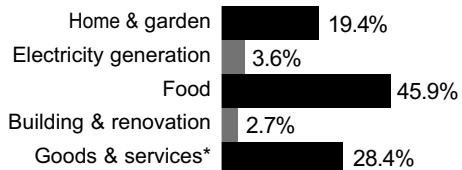
**change society** Vote "green".  Join a green organisation.

## QUICKLIST key areas

The average Australian produces 19 tonnes of **greenhouse gases** a year; from...



The average Australian directly or indirectly consumes 722,000 litres of **water** a year; from...



data from ACF Consuming Australia Report 2007  
(\* appliances, clothes, bodycare, furniture, etc.)

## QUICKLIST green principles

**the starting point...**

value nature

**the underlying principle...**

be happy with less

**the green mantra...**

"reduce, reuse, recycle"

**three global warming hotspots...**

homes ● transport ● food

**four key cuts...**

energy ● water ● chemicals ● waste

**what is green...**

natural ● reusable ● biodegradable ●  
renewable ● local ● efficient

# foreword

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The aim of this book is simply to provide a quick guide to the whole green thing that identifies the key things you can do and puts it all into a bit of context.

This book could inspire you to change your life. I hope it does. But if it only inspires you to change your lightbulbs, that's okay too. At least it's a start.

To keep the book readable, I haven't listed my source for all the facts and figures, but all are from official sources or major green organisations. These sort of statistics will vary according to the year and the methodology used to calculate them, so you may find slightly different figures elsewhere, but their role in this book is just to give you a sense of the scale and importance of different issues.

I've also been fortunate to have had support and advice from Planet Ark, and in particular Paul Klymenko, and editorial help from Tim Wallace, Julian McLeod, Peter Meloy and Mark Snell, while my publisher Zainem Ibrahim has worked her usual wonders behind the scenes.

Mark Mann

## The Little Green Guide

Copyright © 2007 Mark Mann  
Published by EcoPress (www.ecopress.com.au)  
6 Stebbing Lane, Woy Woy, NSW 2256

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National Library of Australia

Cataloguing-in-Publication data

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Mann, Mark, 1963- .

The little green guide : simple ways to save the planet.

ISBN 9780980404807 (pbk.).

1. Sustainable living - Popular works. 2. Environmental responsibility - Popular works. 3. Environmental protection - Popular works. I. Title.

333.72

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Printed by Focus Press (www.focuspress.com.au) on an environmentally-responsible printing press, using 100 per cent recycled paper and soya-based inks.

Design and cover: Stuart Slough.

A percentage of the sale of this book goes to Planet Ark.

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### **key**

each tip in this book has a box, which you can tick to target it.

**\$** the dollar symbol indicates a tip will save you money, repaying any initial costs within a few years.

### **key terms**

CO<sub>2</sub> = carbon dioxide, the key greenhouse gas.

Organic = grown without synthetic chemicals.

Greenhouse gas emissions = the statistics in this book are for anthropogenic emissions; that is, greenhouse gas emissions due to human activity.

### **finding suppliers**

Where no specific contact or website is listed, look on [www.ecodirectory.com.au](http://www.ecodirectory.com.au)

### **it's easy being green**

This book provides a short introduction to what "being green" means and identifies the key steps that make the most difference for the least effort and cost. Start by doing these easy things first and we can worry about the hard stuff later.



# **introduction green themes**

“ Only when the last tree has died  
and the last river been poisoned  
and the last fish been caught will we  
realise we cannot eat money. ”

Cree saying

## getting started

Seen the news? Want to save the planet? This book will get you started. It will show you how to slash your impact on the planet with little or no pain, and real gains to your wallet and health.

Obviously a book this size can't go into detail, especially on complex topics such as organic gardening or building a sustainable home, but it will identify the most useful first steps you can take and tell you how to get more information.

Preventing global warming and other environmental problems is a big challenge. So big it's tempting to give up before you start. But big challenges demand big solutions and rising to this particular challenge means a green revolution that will transform society in exciting, unexpected and positive ways.

Being greener can transform your own life in positive ways too. Doing something positive helps you to feel positive. Learning to "live with less" can be liberating, allowing you to

step off the consumer treadmill. Buying less and using less energy will save you money. Joining local trading systems, community gardens and green networks will help you feel part of your local community. Walking, cycling, avoiding synthetic chemicals and eating less meat will make you healthier. And spending more time enjoying nature, whether in your garden or the bush, reduces stress.

Being green seems hard (at first) because we live in a society that isn't (yet) green. But being green is easy, because you're working with nature, not trying to fight it. It's not rocket science, either: just common sense and changing a few habits.

You're unlikely to do everything in this book all at once. That's okay. Even if you only do one thing, it's better than doing nothing.

Global environmental problems can seem overwhelming, but the best place to start is by taking responsibility for your own actions (although see Ch.17 Social Change). It may seem a small contribution but, as the old saying goes, a journey of a thousand miles begins

with a single step. This book helps you take that first, green, step.

### **make it a habit**

It takes three weeks to break or change a habit. If you make an effort to establish each new green habit for three weeks, after that it will come naturally and you will stop even noticing you are “being green”.

## **green principles**

Grasp these underlying principles and you are well on your way to being green.

### **value nature**

Everything begins with this principle, because until we start to value nature for itself – and not simply because of how it affects us – we’ll keep creating new environmental problems even if we solve our current ones. A sustainable society has to work with nature, not against it.

### **be happy with less**

Making all those new cars, computers, plasma TVs, clothes and so on eats up raw materials and energy, so the less new things we buy the better for the planet.

Buying and using less need not mean being miserable or less fulfilled. Quite the opposite. Once you realise you don’t need these things to be happy, it can make your life simpler, save you money and give you more time to enjoy simply being alive.

### **reduce, reuse, recycle**

Practise the green “three Rs” – in that order.

**Reduce** (that is, buying less things, as above) is best and easiest. After all, if you don’t have it, it isn’t a problem.

But obviously there are things you really do need. For these, try to **reuse**. Repairing, adapting, swapping, borrowing or buying second-hand are all forms of reuse, keeping goods in circulation for longer and breaking the “throw away and replace” cycle.

And if you can’t reuse, then **recycle**. Buying

recycled goods and recycling things yourself is a lot kinder to the planet than using more natural resources to make new products from scratch.

### three global warming hotspots

The three main ways most of us contribute to global warming are our **homes'** energy use (see Ch.1 Energy); our **food** (see Ch.7 Food) and our **travel**, especially driving and flying (see Ch.8 Cars and Ch.13 Holidays).

### four key cuts

The four key areas in which we can limit our environmental impact are by cutting down on **energy, water, chemicals** and **waste**.

### what is green

Something is likely to be “green” if it is **natural, reusable, biodegradable, renewable, locally produced** and **energy or water efficient**. The more of these boxes something ticks, the more environmentally friendly it is likely to be.

## green issues

### global warming

Human activity, in particular burning fossil fuels and deforestation, is causing a build-up of gases such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane and nitrous oxide in the atmosphere.

These trap heat and raise temperatures (hence the term “greenhouse gases”).

The effects could include more drought, severe storms, spreading tropical diseases and rising sea levels due to melting icefields in Antarctica and Greenland, which could drown coastlines and low-lying regions. This could create billions of environmental refugees, leading to worldwide chaos.

Roughly 95 per cent of climate experts say

#### setting targets

Scientists say we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 60 per cent by 2050. That sounds a lot but it only requires a reduction of a few per cent each year – if we start now.

there is a 90 per cent chance that global warming is real and will have catastrophic consequences if we do not act to reduce greenhouse emissions. They could all be wrong – but would you bet on it?

### **loss of wilderness**

Forests, mangroves, wetlands and grasslands are being destroyed by human activities such as logging, agriculture and urban growth. But these ecosystems play a vital role in regulating the global ecosystem and shelter much of the world's biodiversity.

### **loss of biodiversity**

Species are becoming extinct at a thousand times the normal rate, largely due to global warming and loss of wilderness.

### **collapse of marine life**

Many fish species are on the verge of extinction due to overfishing. Global warming also threatens the survival of coral reefs, including the Great Barrier Reef.

### **desertification**

Overfarming and inappropriate farming methods are causing soil erosion, turning farmland into desert.

### **pollution**

Pollutants from fossil fuels and synthetic chemicals are harming soil, water, animals, plants and human health.

### **water**

There's just not enough freshwater to go around at the rate we are using it.

## **human impact**

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One way to measure our impact on the planet is the idea of an ecological footprint. This is an estimate of the land needed to provide the food, energy and natural resources we use.

To support the world's six billion people sustainably (that is, using natural resources no faster than they can regenerate) each

individual's ecological footprint needs to be 1.8 hectares or less.

Despite rises in China and India, 20 per cent of the world's population, mainly in the developed world, still consume 80 per cent of its natural resources.

For instance, the average Australian's ecological footprint is 6.6 hectares, compared to a world average of 2.2 hectares (WWF Living Planet Report 2006).

If everyone else lived like Australians, we'd need three and a half planets to support us.

### a growing footprint

- 1** Since 1961, humanity's ecological footprint has tripled.
- 2** Since 1970, the mass of plants and animals on earth has fallen by 40 per cent.
- 3** Globally, annual greenhouse emissions have risen 28 per cent since 1990 and they are still increasing every year.
- 4** The world's population rose from two billion in 1930 to six billion in 2000 and is set to top nine billion by 2050.

### Australia's green world ranking

- X** most greenhouse gas emissions per person
- X** third highest water use per person
- X** fourth highest number of species threatened with extinction
- X** fifth most waste per person
- X** destroys more native vegetation per year than any other developed nation
- X** sixth highest ecological footprint

(sources: various, ACF, IUCN Red List, OECD, Wilderness Society, WWF Living Planet Report 2006)

### Australia and global warming

Australia, with 0.32 per cent of the world's population, produces 1.43 per cent of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. We have the world's highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions at 27 tonnes each – just ahead of the US and more than twice as much as the UK, Japan or Germany. Since 1980, emissions in Australia have risen twice as fast as in the US and five times faster than in Europe (CSIRO).



# **section 1**

# **green**

# **home**

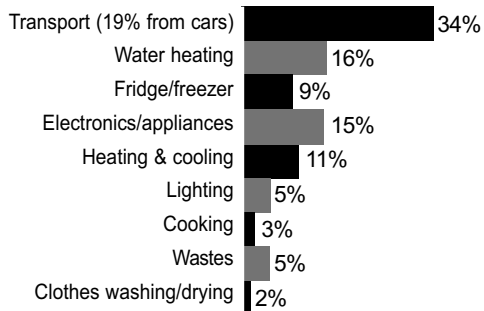
“ Earth provides enough to  
satisfy every man’s need,  
but not every man’s greed.”  
Mahatma Gandhi

# 1 energy

Homes generate about one fifth of Australia's greenhouse gases. But you can easily reduce your energy use by changing a few habits and fitting a few low-cost energy saving devices.

Then switch your electricity supply to renewable energy by choosing GreenPower.

## Australian households greenhouse gas emissions (home/transport)



(source: [www.greenhouse.gov.au/gwci](http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/gwci))

## GreenPower

Sign up to a GreenPower electricity scheme and your energy supplier is obliged to generate an equal amount of energy from renewable sources such as wind or solar.

If you choose 100 per cent GreenPower your home will be “carbon-free” and you’ll be funding renewable energy development.

GreenPower adds about \$4/5 a week to your electricity bill but you can recover this, and more, with the energy-saving tips below.

[www.greenpower.gov.au](http://www.greenpower.gov.au)

[www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au](http://www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au)

[www.greenpowerpricewatch.com.au](http://www.greenpowerpricewatch.com.au)

## energy: key steps

**1 Heating/cooling.** Insulate your roof. Fit draft excluders to the bottom of doors. \$   
More heating/cooling tips below.

**2 Hot water.** Install solar hot water. It will pay for itself in a few years. There are grants available. Solar water heaters need a north-sloping roof, or go for a heat-exchange

system such as a Quantum Pump ([www.quantum-energy.com.au](http://www.quantum-energy.com.au)). \$ □ Fit a water saving showerhead and take shorter showers. \$ □

**3 Lighting.** Fit energy saving compact fluorescent lightbulbs. Replace halogen downlights with efficient LED lamps. Turn lights off when leaving a room. \$ □

**4 Appliances.** Don't leave appliances on standby. Turn them off at the wall. \$ □

**5 Go for gas.** Switch to natural gas if it's available. It produces a third of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of coal-fired electricity. □

### want to do more?

**Clothes:** wash in cold water or at 30°. Dry clothes on a clothes line or airtier instead of in a tumble dryer. \$ □ **Cooking:** microwave ovens,

slow-cookers, pressure-cookers and stir-frying on gas stoves are all energy efficient methods of cooking. Steam vegetables with minimal water and the lid on. Don't overfill kettles. Choose a fan-assisted oven and make sure the oven door seals. \$ □ **Fridge:** check your fridge door seals, defrost regularly and dust condensing coils to improve efficiency. \$ □ **Heating:** consider gas central heating or a wood pellet stove heater. Wood from a sustainable source is a renewable and carbon-neutral fuel ([www.pelletheaters.com.au](http://www.pelletheaters.com.au)). □ **Appliances:** buy appliances with high energy ratings ([www.energyrating.gov.au](http://www.energyrating.gov.au)). \$ □ **Lights:** clean lampshades and lightbulbs, as dirt can cut out up to half of their light. Silver reflector strips behind lightbulbs can increase light output. \$ □ **Air-conditioning:** buy the most energy efficient air-conditioner you can find. \$ □

#### what a waste!

About 66 per cent of energy in a coal-fired power station is lost as heat and another 8 per cent is lost during transmission over the grid. That's three-quarters of energy lost before it even reaches your home (CSIRO).

### more heating/cooling tips \$

Shut **doors** so you just heat/cool the rooms you are using. □ In winter, wear **warmer**

**clothes** rather than turn up the heating. □  
**Double-glaze windows** or fit a low-cost insulating film ([www.clearcomfort.com.au](http://www.clearcomfort.com.au)). □  
**Shade windows** with curtains, awnings, shutters or deciduous bushes to keep the heat out during summer and in during winter. □ On cold nights, use extra blankets and hot water bottles. □ Avoid **bar/fan heaters** except in small rooms for short bursts. □ **Insulate** under floorboards. □ Install **ceiling fans** as circulating air feels cooler. □

**websites** [www.greenhouse.gov.au](http://www.greenhouse.gov.au),  
[www.yourhome.gov.au](http://www.yourhome.gov.au)

**see also** Ch.4 Building & renovation: build an energy-efficient home.

## 2water

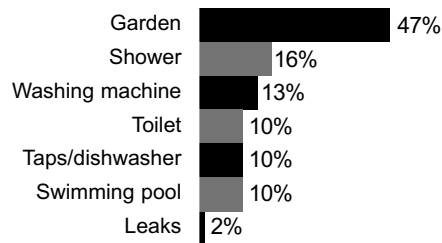
Australia is the world's driest continent after Antarctica, yet we use more water per person than almost any other nation. As a result, most of our major towns and cities are facing a severe water shortage. But most of

us can probably halve our water consumption with little difficulty, while installing a rainwater tank will provide thousands of litres of free additional water.

### water facts

- Australians use 282 litres of fresh water per person per day. The average person in a developing country uses 10 litres of water a day, equal to one flush of a non-dual flush toilet.
- Homes and gardens account for 12 per cent of

### Australian households water use (home/garden)



water used in Australia. ● Only about 1 per cent of earth's water is drinkable freshwater, 97 per cent of it in underground aquifers. ● In 2004, 16 per cent of households reused or recycled some of their water.

## water: key steps

**1 Take shorter showers** (not baths) and fit a water efficient showerhead. They cost from about \$20. \$ □

**2 Install a rainwater tank.** Use rainwater falling on your roof for your toilets, washing machine and garden. □

**3 Toilets.** If your toilet isn't dual-flush, reduce the water it uses by putting a bottle of water in the cistern so it holds less water. You can also buy cheap "cistern converters" that do the same thing. Don't use a brick; it may crumble and block your system. □ Best of all, install a composting toilet (see Ch.4 Building & renovation). □

**4 Dishes.** If you wash dishes by hand, use the plug and don't wash or rinse with

running water. □ If you use a dishwasher, scrape plates first instead of rinsing them and only run full loads. □ Buy a water-efficient dishwasher. These use as little as 9 litres per load, while older models can use 90 litres. □

**5 Washing machine.** Only run full loads. □ When replacing it, buy a water-efficient front-loader. □ Don't wash clothes that aren't dirty. Hanging them for an hour on a clothes line instead will air out stale smells. □

**6 Taps.** Fit aerating taps. They cost just a few dollars and will halve water flow. □ Turn off taps while cleaning your teeth and put the plug in when washing your hands. □

**7 Fix drips and leaks.** A single dripping tap can waste 12,000 litres a year. □

## want to do more?

Get a cover for your **pool** – a pool can lose 30,000 litres of water a year through evaporation. □ Don't flush the **toilet** every time you pee. □ Wash your **car** with a bucket and sponge, not a hose. □

### divert greywater into the garden

If you use natural, phosphate-free soaps and detergents (see Ch.3 Chemicals), then you can reuse much of the water from your home on your garden. You can fit greywater recycling systems but all you really need is a bucket.

**Dishwasher/washing machine:** let the outflow hose drain into a bucket for the final rinse then empty it into the garden, or connect a hose to the outflow and let it drain into the garden, or (get a plumber to) fit a simple greywater diverting device. □

**Bathroom:** use a bucket to collect water from the shower or bath, or a small bucket to catch the initial cold water in washbasins, then empty it into your garden. You can also pour it into the toilet bowl to flush your toilet. □

**Kitchen:** wash veggies and dishes in a bowl, then empty the water into your garden. □

For health reasons you should always use greywater immediately, don't use it on food or seedlings and don't allow it to pool on your lawn.

**websites** [www.savewater.com.au](http://www.savewater.com.au),  
[www.greenplumbers.com.au](http://www.greenplumbers.com.au)

**see also** Ch.5 Garden: water-wise gardens.  
Ch.7 Food: eat less meat.

## 3 chemicals

In our modern world synthetic chemicals are everywhere: from furniture, toys and carpets to clothes, detergents, bodycare products, insect sprays and so on.

These often-toxic chemicals find their way into our air, soil and waterways (for instance, from landfill sites or detergents washed down our drains). And this everyday “chemical cocktail” has been linked to cancers, allergies, birth defects and more.

In truth, no-one really knows what effect this constant low-level exposure to so many synthetic chemicals will have on our long-term health. But if you'd rather not be part of this vast experiment, you can buy natural domestic cleaners, air fresheners and insect repellents. Or you can make your own.

## chemical facts

- It has been estimated there are between 70,000 and 100,000 synthetic chemicals in common use today.
- Most people now have about 400 synthetic chemicals in their blood.
- Indoor air quality is typically five times worse than outdoors, but the average Australian spends more than three-quarters of their lives indoors.
- Every year 3,500 children under five in Australia are admitted to hospital with poisoning after swallowing household cleaners, bleaches, medicines, etc.

## chemicals: key steps

**1 Natural cleaners.** Look for cleaning brands that are free of synthetic chemicals, such as Herbon, Ecover or Aware. Or make your own cleaners using simple ingredients such as bicarbonate of soda, vinegar and lemon (see books, below). □

**2 Use microfibre cloths and mops.** Clean tiles, kitchen tops and floors without detergent. Good-quality ones last years. □

**3 Pest control.** Buy natural pest-control products (available in health stores or the online stores in Section 4: Resources). Use flyscreens and swatters, and tolerate insect-eating non-venomous spiders. Remove stagnant water from your garden to stop mosquitoes breeding (see books, below). □

**4 Air-fresheners.** Open windows for fresh air instead. Use natural pot-pourri, scented candles, essential oil burners or water sprays with essential oils. Indoor plants absorb toxins and improve air quality. □

## want to do more?

**Avoid dry-cleaning** as it leaves synthetic chemicals on your clothes. □ Get a **high-pressure steam cleaner** to clean floors. □ Avoid furniture and furnishings treated with brominated flame retardants (IKEA doesn't use them), and **furniture** made from particle board, which often contains formaldehyde. □ Choose **furnishings** made of natural, untreated materials such as linen, hemp, organic cotton,

canvas, glass, untreated wood and clay. □ You spend a third of your life asleep so keep your **bedroom** free of synthetic chemicals by painting your bedroom walls with natural paint (see Ch.4 Building & renovation) and buying organic cotton bedding. □

**websites** National Toxics Network  
([www.oztoxics.org](http://www.oztoxics.org))

**stores** see [www.ecodirectory.com.au](http://www.ecodirectory.com.au) or  
Section 4: Resources for online stores  
selling natural cleaning and pest control brands.

**books** Chemical Free Home (Robin Stewart), Safer  
Cleaning and Better Living Tips (Zoe James),  
Green Cleaner (Barbara Lord), Organic Control  
of Household Pests (Jackie French), Organic  
Home (Rosamond Richardson)

**see also** Ch.5 Garden and Ch.7 Food: go organic.

## 4 building & renovation

Bricks, tiles, concrete, wood... all building materials have some environmental impact. And poor home design can also lock you into years of wasteful and expensive energy and water consumption.

Instead, use eco-friendly and salvaged building materials, and design your home to be energy and water efficient so it needs less heating, cooling and water. You'll reduce energy bills, make your home more comfortable and increase its resale value.

### building & renovation: key steps

**1 Insulate.** Good insulation is the most cost-effective way to reduce your home's energy use. \$ □

**2 Use passive solar design.** Good building design uses natural heat, light and shade to make your home more

comfortable and will cut your future energy bills by reducing the need for heating, lighting and air-conditioning. \$ □

**3 Install a composting toilet.** Dry composting toilets use no water and produce great compost for your garden. And no, they don't smell. (They have a small extractor fan.) □

**4 Use natural paints/varnishes.** Standard paint is petrol-based and emits toxic gases. Instead, paint interiors with plant-based paints. Using light colours reduces the need for lighting ([www.greenpainters.com.au](http://www.greenpainters.com.au)). □

**5 Use sustainable timber.** Choose Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified timber or see [www.ecospecifier.com.au](http://www.ecospecifier.com.au). □

**6 Use salvaged materials.** Discarded building materials make up a large proportion of landfill. \$ □

**7 Avoid nylon carpets.** Nylon is a petrol derivative. Instead opt for tiles, sustainably sourced timber, bamboo or natural fibres such

as sisal ([www.naturalfloor.com.au](http://www.naturalfloor.com.au)). Cork is another sustainable option, although it is imported from Europe. If you really want carpet, then choose 100 per cent wool with natural fibre backing and no brominated flame retardant, but note that all carpets shelter allergy-causing dustmites. Use carpet tiles, so you can just replace worn or damaged tiles rather than throwing out the whole carpet. □

### want to do more?

See if your home is suitable for **solar panels** (you need an area of north-facing roof; government rebates are available) or a small **wind turbine**. □ Consider eco-friendly building materials such as **mud-brick**, **rammed earth** or **strawbale**. □

**websites** Rainbow Power Company ([www.rpc.com.au](http://www.rpc.com.au)), Solar Shop ([www.solarshop.com.au](http://www.solarshop.com.au)), [www.yourhome.gov.au](http://www.yourhome.gov.au), [www.ecospecifier.com.au](http://www.ecospecifier.com.au)

**books** Warm House Cool House (Nick Hollo), Sustainable House (Michael Mobbs)

# 5garden

A garden can be a sanctuary from the stresses of modern life, a place to unwind and watch the everyday miracles of nature unfold. But overuse of water and synthetic chemical fertilisers and pesticides means many gardens come at a cost to the planet. Make your garden truly green by encouraging wildlife, minimising water, avoiding synthetic chemicals and growing some food.

## water-wise gardening

In Australia, gardens use almost half of domestic water. But by being water-wise, using **greywater**, greywater safe laundry powders and installing a **rainwater tank** (see Ch.2 Water), your garden can still flourish with no town water at all.

Choose **drought-resistant plants and turf**. □ Reduce the size of your **lawn** or create a lawn-free garden with shrubs, gravel or paving. In dry spells, don't cut lawns. □ Plant Australian **native plants** that will thrive without watering.

□ **Mulch** (covering soil with lawn cuttings, straw, etc.) can reduce evaporation by 70 per cent. □ Only **water plants** when they start to wilt to encourage deeper root systems. Water near dawn or dusk to minimise evaporation, and use a **watering can** instead of a hose. □ Design your **driveway** and **patio** to slope so rain runs into your garden, not down drains. □

## composting □

Composting is a green living basic. It reduces waste and provides nutrients for your garden.

It's easy – all you need is a compost bin, or a pile in your garden and something to cover it. Just remember to turn the compost regularly to aerate it (which stops it producing methane).

Most kitchen scraps (except meat) can be composted, as well as garden cuttings and paper. Garden cuttings can also be left to decompose back into the soil.

Worm farms are another way to compost. They require very little maintenance and produce liquid fertiliser for your garden.

A Bokashi bin ([www.bokashi.com.au](http://www.bokashi.com.au)) can take

meat too, and produces great natural fertiliser.

## gardening: other key steps

**1 Go organic.** Buy a book on organic gardening and learn how to cut out synthetic chemicals (see books, below). □

**2 Go native.** Plant Australian natives, especially ones native to your area. They won't need water and pesticides, and native trees and bushes such as grevilleas and banksias attract native birds and animals. Avoid exotic species identified as threats to native ecosystems ([www.backyardbuddies.net.au](http://www.backyardbuddies.net.au)). □

**3 Go wild.** Create a wildlife area, fenced off from pets, with a pond (frogs, birds, dragonflies), batbox and some rocks for lizards ([www.floraforfauna.com.au](http://www.floraforfauna.com.au)). □

### no garden?

Grow herbs in a window box, or find out if there is a local community garden near you ([www.communitygarden.org.au](http://www.communitygarden.org.au)). □

**4 Grow food** to reduce food packaging and transport. Good choices for novice gardeners include tomatoes, garlic, carrots, rocket, rosemary, parsley, mint and basil. Or explore native “bushtucker” plants. \$ □

### want to do more?

Share **garden tools** with neighbours. □ Look out for second-hand **garden furniture** and salvaged **paving** and timber for **decking**. □ Don't use **patio heaters**. If you are cold, put on warmer clothes or go inside. □

**websites** Sustainable Gardening Australia ([www.sgaonline.org.au](http://www.sgaonline.org.au)), Permaculture Research Centre ([www.permaculture.org.au](http://www.permaculture.org.au)), Greening Australia ([www.greeningaustralia.org.au](http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au)), Permaculture Institute ([www.tagari.com](http://www.tagari.com)), [www.organicdownunder.com](http://www.organicdownunder.com)

**books** Compost: The Natural Way to Make Food for your Garden (Ken Thompson), Grow Your Own Bushfoods (Keith Smith, Irene Smith & Beth Norling), Natural Control of Garden Pests, Organic Self-Sufficiency and Organic Control of Common Weeds (all



# **section 2**

# **green**

# **living**

“ Be the change  
you wish to see  
in the world. ”  
Mahatma Gandhi

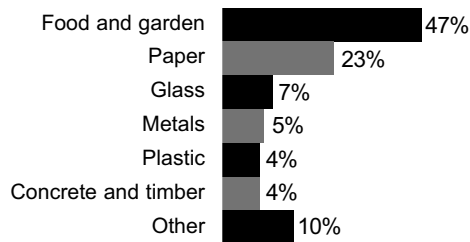
# 6waste

Australians produce more rubbish per person than any nation except the US – about one tonne each a year.

Although we have one of the highest rates of recycling in the world, disposing of all this waste still creates environmental problems, such as emissions of methane (a greenhouse gas) from decomposing landfill.

And buying new things to replace those we

Australian household waste



throw out uses more energy and natural resources. But you can easily reduce waste by learning to “reduce, reuse, recycle”, composting and avoiding overpackaging.

## waste facts

- Recycling in Australia rose from 20 per cent of household waste in 1993 to 46 per cent in 2006.
- About 40 per cent of landfill waste (8.4 million tonnes a year) is food scraps and garden cuttings that could be composted.

## waste: key steps

**1 Reduce.** The best way to avoid creating waste is to buy less in the first place (see Ch.12 Shopping). \$ □

**2 Reuse.** Keep and reuse plastic bags and takeaway containers, cut up old clothes for cleaning cloths, etc. \$ □

**3 Recycle.** Use your recycling bin. □ Find out what you can recycle in your local area, call the National Recycling Hotline on 1300 733 712 or visit [www.recyclingnearyou.com.au](http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au). □

Pass things on to family and friends.  Give unwanted items away to charity shops or on [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org). Sell things at car boot and garage sales, in classified adverts or on [www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au).

**4 Compost.** (See Ch.5 Garden.) Even if you have no garden, you can still use a Bokashi bin in your kitchen to reduce waste. Use the fertiliser for potted plants or give it to a friend with a garden.

**5 Avoid packaging.** Try to buy fewer overpackaged or disposable products (see Ch.12 Shopping).  Avoid plastic bags.  Take reusable bags with you.

### want to do more?

Reduce **paper waste** by reading newspapers

#### no butts

Globally, more than 7.2 billion cigarette butts are discarded each year, each with hundreds of toxic chemicals. Put butts in a film canister to dispose of at home.

online, giving magazines to doctors' waiting rooms and exchanging books at second-hand bookstores, etc.  Steam-clean **carpets** and get old **furniture** reupholstered rather than throwing them out. \$  Use **handkerchiefs** and **napkins** instead of paper tissues and serviettes.  Put a **no junk mail** sticker on your letter box.  Carry a small day-pack with a reusable cup, container and cutlery for **takeout food** and **tea/coffees**, and a reusable **water bottle** instead of buying bottled water and soft drinks. \$  Use rechargeable **batteries**. \$  Half of dumped electrical goods still work or need only minor repairs, so donate old **computers** to schools and charities and recycle **mobile phones** ([www.mobilemuster.org.au](http://www.mobilemuster.org.au)).  Use biodegradable **bin liners**.  Recycle your printer cartridges ([www.planetark.com/cartridges](http://www.planetark.com/cartridges))

**websites** [www.recyclingnearyou.com.au](http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au),  
[www.cleanup.org.au](http://www.cleanup.org.au), [www.boomerangalliance.org](http://www.boomerangalliance.org)

**see also** Ch.7 Food: don't waste food.

Ch.11 Parenting: use cloth nappies.

Ch.12 Shopping: reduce packaging.

# 7 food

In Australia and globally, farming accounts for 70 per cent of water use. It takes up a third of the earth's land and uses huge amounts of synthetic, often toxic, chemicals in pesticides and fertilisers.

It also contributes to global warming. A big factor here is beef – it's been estimated cattle account for about 15 per cent of Australia's greenhouse emissions from land clearing, transport, methane and nitrous oxide from fertiliser, animal waste and soil disturbance.

To cut your environmental impact reduce meat and waste, use the money you save to buy more organic food, and buy local produce.

## food facts

- Australia's farmers use 100 times more water for irrigation than UK farmers.
- In the past fifty years, the number of fish in large species such as tuna and cod has fallen by 90 per cent.
- It takes up to 50,000 litres of water to produce 1kg of beef.
- 70 per cent of the

world's arable land is used to rear livestock. ● Australians throw away more than \$5 billion of food a year.

## eat less meat \$ □

It may sound odd, but cutting down on red meat could be the easiest way you can help fight global warming. Meat is inefficient: animals, especially cattle, eat much more food over their lifetime than they supply as meat, which means more resources and more land cleared for grazing or growing feed. In fact, for a family of four, eating one less meal of red meat a week could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by as much as buying a hybrid car. And it's a lot cheaper too!

## food: other key steps

**1 Buy organic food.** That is, food grown without using synthetic chemicals. Get a regular local organic box delivered. □

**2 Buy locally grown food.** To reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> produced by transporting food. □

**3 Go native.** Eat native produce such as lemon myrtle, macadamias, Davidson plums or wattle seed, which need less synthetic chemicals and water than introduced crops. And eat kangaroo. Their soft wide feet don't destroy Australia's brittle topsoil, and their meat is lean and healthy. □

**4 Avoid overfished fish.** Three-quarters of commercial fish species face extinction due to overfishing – see the Australian Marine Conservation Society's Sustainable Seafood Guide ([www.amcs.org.au](http://www.amcs.org.au)). □

**5 Don't waste food.** Cook only what you need, turn leftovers into fried rice, soup, etc. It is estimated that a quarter of all the food that is sold in Australia is thrown away – a total of 3.3 million tonnes a year. \$ □

### want to do more?

Drink **organic wine** ([www.organicwine.com.au](http://www.organicwine.com.au)). □  
Buy local food from **farmers' markets** ([www.farmersmarkets.org.au](http://www.farmersmarkets.org.au)). \$ □ Campaign against **genetically modified (GM) food**.

Critics say altering the DNA of plants and animals is just too risky ([www.truefood.org.au](http://www.truefood.org.au)). □  
Buy **organic bananas**. Runoff of synthetic chemicals from banana plantations has been cited as a threat to the Great Barrier Reef. □

### organic certification

To be sure you are buying organic, check the organic certification. The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) accredits certifying bodies including Australian Certified Organic (ACO), Bio-Dynamic Research Institute (Demeter), National Association for Sustainable Agriculture (NASAA), Organic Growers of Australia (OGA), Tasmanian Organic Producers (TOP) and Safe Food Queensland (SFQ).

**websites** [www.organicchoice.com.au](http://www.organicchoice.com.au)

**magazines** CleanFood organic  
([www.cleanfood.com.au](http://www.cleanfood.com.au))

**see also** Ch.5 Garden: grow some food.  
Ch.12 Shopping: reduce packaging.

# 8 cars

Cars produce nearly a fifth of household greenhouse gas emissions, so one of the best things you can do for the planet is to drive less. Not owning a car saves you money (a typical car costs about \$7,500 a year to run) while cycling and walking are also great for your health.

Even if Australia's sprawling suburbs and patchy public transport can often make it hard to manage without a car entirely, you can still try to drive less, choose a fuel-efficient car and learn fuel-efficient driving.

## car facts

- Road traffic accounts for 16 per cent of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.
- CO<sub>2</sub>

### killer on the road

Road accidents kill about 1,600 people a year in Australia and more than a million worldwide, with traffic-related air pollution contributing to three times more deaths.

emissions from transport in Australia have risen by a third since 1990.

## cars: key steps

**1 Don't drive to work.** Commute by public transport, car-pool with colleagues or neighbours, cycle or use a scooter (try an electric one: [www.evtaustralia.com.au](http://www.evtaustralia.com.au)). And if it's possible, work from home some days. □

**2 Reduce short car trips.** Half of car journeys are less than 3km but car engines are least efficient while still warming up. Replace a few car trips by walking and cycling (or even skateboarding). □ Combine errands. □ Shop locally or online. □ Put a basket on your bike for local shopping trips. □

**3 Avoid gas guzzlers.** Make the next car that you buy a smaller and more fuel-efficient model ([www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au](http://www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au), [www.greenhouse.gov.au/fuelguide](http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/fuelguide)). \$ □

**4 Learn fuel-efficient driving.** It can reduce your fuel consumption by up to a third (see below). \$ □

**5 Join campaigns** for better public transport and cycle networks. □

**6 Get on the bus.** Start by working out one regular trip you can do by bus and make it a habit. \$ □

### want to do more?

Find out if there is a **car club** near you. You pay a monthly fee and can book a car by the hour ([www.goget.com.au](http://www.goget.com.au), [www.flexicar.com.au](http://www.flexicar.com.au)). \$ □

**Recycle motor oil** ([www.oilrecycling.gov.au](http://www.oilrecycling.gov.au)). □

Buy products made from **recycled tyres**. Use old tyres to make kids' swings, plant beds, etc.

□ Use **biodiesel** – make your own from cooking oil ([www.biodiesel.org.au](http://www.biodiesel.org.au)). □ Buy an **electric hybrid** car, such as the Toyota Prius

#### what a waste!

In a typical car, three-quarters of fuel is wasted as engine heat and up to 95 per cent of the rest simply moves the weight of the car itself. As little as 1 or 2 per cent is being used to get you to your destination.

or Honda Civic – half the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of similar sized petrol cars. □ Don't drive the kids to **school**. Instead, send your children to the nearest school so they can walk or cycle, and propose that your school starts a walking bus scheme ([www.travelsmart.gov.au/schools/](http://www.travelsmart.gov.au/schools/)). \$ □

### fuel-efficient driving

Reduce cruising **speeds** by 20km/h. □ Keep your car **serviced** and your **tyres** correctly inflated. □ **Anticipate** traffic changes to brake and accelerate smoothly. □ Shut your windows at higher speeds and remove your roof-rack when you are not using it, to improve **aerodynamics**. □ Take out **baggage** to lighten the car. □ Turn the engine off if you are **stationary** for more than 15 seconds. □ Try to avoid stop/start **peak-hour** traffic. □ Limit **air conditioning** and heating. □

**websites** [www.travelsmart.gov.au](http://www.travelsmart.gov.au)

**car pooling** [www.ecarpool.com.au](http://www.ecarpool.com.au),  
[www.carpool-it.com](http://www.carpool-it.com), [www.icarpool.com.au](http://www.icarpool.com.au),  
[www.ozcarpool.com.au](http://www.ozcarpool.com.au), [www.needaride.com.au](http://www.needaride.com.au)

## 9 work

Whether you are the boss or an employee, there are many ways to make your workplace and work life more environmentally friendly, starting with things as simple as turning off lights and computers when you are leaving the office.

### work facts

- Surveys show about 90 per cent of staff would like their employers to be greener.

### work: key steps

**1 Reduce car/air travel.** Commute and go to meetings by public transport, cycling or car-pooling. \$  Use tele-conferencing and email to reduce business travel. \$  Work from home once or twice a week. \$  Make your company fleet more fuel-efficient. \$  Replace company cars with public transport season-tickets.  Install showers for cyclists.

**2 Reuse and Recycle.** Recycle bottles, containers and packaging.  Use paper on both sides and only print when necessary. Recycle waste paper and reuse jiffy bags and envelopes. \$  Buy recycled paper.

**3 Use less lighting.** Reduce lighting in low-traffic areas. \$  Fit energy-saving lightbulbs. \$  Install skylights.  Fit reflector strips behind lights to increase their effectiveness. \$

**4 Turn it off.** Switch off computers, copiers, lights, etc, when leaving the office.  Fit sensors to turn off lights. \$

**5 Turn it down.** Turn your office's heating and air-conditioning down 1-2°. \$

### want to do more?

Refill printer and photocopier **toner cartridges** ([www.cartridgeworld.com.au](http://www.cartridgeworld.com.au)) or recycle them through 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark'. ([www.planetark.com/cartridges](http://www.planetark.com/cartridges)) \$  Save water with dual-flush **toilets**, aerating push-button taps

and a waterless urinal ([www.desert.com.au](http://www.desert.com.au)). \$□  
 Use recycled **toilet paper**, and towel rolls instead of paper towels. □ Ask your **cleaners** to use natural cleaning products. □ Ask the canteen to use real **crockery and cutlery**, even if you take food back to your desk. Use real cups for tea and coffee. □ Buy **tea and coffee** that's organic (and fair trade: see Ch.17 Social Change). □ Use the stairs: **lifts** can use 5-15 per cent of an office building's electricity. □ Buy second-hand **office furniture** (\$) and donate or sell your old office furniture. □ Upgrade **computers** with more memory, etc, instead of replacing them. Or use laptops: they can use 90 per cent less energy than desktop PCs. When you do get rid of computers, donate them to charity or schools or recycle them (1300 733 712 or [www.recyclingnearyou.com.au](http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au)). □ Use a GreenPower **web hosting** company for your website. □

**websites** [www.ecooffice.com.au](http://www.ecooffice.com.au)

**see also** Ch.1 Energy: sign up for GreenPower.  
 Ch.14 Money: ask for ethical options in your firm's

superannuation plan.

## 10body

Cosmetics contain many toxic synthetic chemicals that are absorbed into your body, while cotton uses a lot of synthetic chemical pesticides. Avoid these synthetic chemicals by switching to natural bodycare and organic cotton or hemp clothes.

### body facts

- More than 1000 synthetic chemicals are used in bodycare products.
- Australians spend \$60 billion a year on personal care and \$14 billion on clothes.
- Australian women use 1.38 billion disposable sanitary products per year.
- It takes 150g of pesticides to produce a cotton T-shirt.

### body: key steps

- 1 Buy fewer new clothes.** Buy second-hand, learn to sew to repair clothes, swap with friends, invest in quality that will last, dye

faded white clothes to give them a new lease of life, get shoes resoled, etc. Learn to distinguish style, which endures, from passing fashion. □

**2 Buy organic cotton or hemp clothes.** Globally, cotton uses 10 per cent of all pesticide and a quarter of all insecticide. □

**3 Use fewer cosmetics.** Healthy skin comes from exercise, fresh air, eating well, getting enough sleep and good fluid intake. Many cosmetics are even counter-productive, blocking your body's natural cleansing mechanisms. □

**4 Switch to natural bodycare.** Look for bodycare brands that are free of synthetic chemicals such as Jurlique, Natural Instinct or Pure Earth. Or make your own (see books, below). □

**5 Use unbleached organic cotton tampons.** ([www.organictampons.com.au](http://www.organictampons.com.au), [www.natracare.com](http://www.natracare.com)) □

**want to do more?**

Buy **razors** with replaceable blades and **toothbrushes** with replaceable heads. □ Use recycled **toilet paper**. □ Give unwanted **clothes** to second-hand shops (see Ch.6 Waste). □ Buy **fair trade clothes** (Fairtrade Association; [www.fta.org.au](http://www.fta.org.au)). □ Grow **natural remedies**. Try aloe vera for bites and burns, or peppermint or rosemary tea for headaches. □ Recycle used plastic shampoo bottles and other containers where possible (call National Recycling Hotline 1300 733 712) □

**organisations** National Toxics Network ([oztoxics.org](http://oztoxics.org))

**books** The Ultimate Natural Beauty Guide (Josephine Fairley & Annie Hanson), Natural Beauty at Home (Janice Cox), Natural Beauty Basics (Dorie Byers), Natural Beauty Recipe Book (Gill Farrer-Halls), Natural Beauty Treatments (Charmaine Yabsley), 1001 Natural Remedies (Laurel Vukovic)

# 11 parenting

Nappies, toys, food, clothes... just because kids are small doesn't mean their environmental impact is. But you can easily reduce that impact, and teach your children eco-aware habits that will stay with them for life.

## parenting facts

- Australians use more than 800 million disposable nappies a year. They can take 100 years to break down in landfill.
- About 80 per cent of new toys are made from non-biodegradable plastic.

## parenting: key steps

**1 Use cloth nappies.** Modern fitted cloth nappies are better for the environment, cheaper and as convenient as disposables (\$). Buy organic cotton brands such as Nature's Child or Under The Nile. Soak soiled nappies in water with bicarb of soda or vinegar before washing. Or use eco-disposables such as EcoBots, Bambo Nature, or Nature Boy and

Nature Girl, which are all about 70 per cent biodegradable. ☐

**2 Breastfeed.** Not only does it avoid the bottles, sterilisation equipment and packaging of powdered milk, but it's better for your baby too. Breastfeeding can take a few weeks to master so if you are finding it difficult or painful seek support before giving up ([www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)). \$ ☐

**3 Don't buy new.** Most kids' clothes, toys, prams, etc, are outgrown rather than worn out so you can often pick these things up at garage and car-boot sales and charity shops. Organise toy-swap sessions with friends where kids can exchange toys when they are bored with them. \$ ☐ Hand down your own children's hand-me-downs, or give them away to charity or on [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org). ☐

**4 Nurture a nature lover.** Help your kids grow some plants. ☐ Get some chickens and a worm farm. ☐ Explore Australia's wildlife together (see Ch.16 Wildlife & conservation). ☐

## want to do more?

Use rechargeable **batteries** for toys (or avoid battery-powered toys). \$  Buy fewer **plastic toys** – and avoid PVC.  Exchange toys at a **toy library** (listed on [www.kidspot.com.au](http://www.kidspot.com.au)). \$  Puree organic vegetables and stewed fruit instead of buying commercial **baby food**. \$  Use flannels or cut old clothing into strips as washable **nappy wipes**.  Keep a box of old cards, buttons, wrapping paper, etc, for **crafts**. \$

**websites** [www.naturalparenting.com.au](http://www.naturalparenting.com.au),  
**magazines** Kindred ([www.kindredmedia.com.au](http://www.kindredmedia.com.au))

**see also** Ch.3 Chemicals, Ch.7 Food and  
Ch.10 Body: avoid synthetic chemicals to protect

### counter pester power

Make “reduce, reuse, recycle” a family adventure, such as going on treasure hunts for toys at garage sales or teaching kids how to fix bikes or how to revive old clothes with natural dyes or funky patches.

children’s developing immune systems.  
Ch.8 Cars: walk, cycle or car-pool to school.

# 12 shopping

To put it simply, we buy too much – and every new item takes its toll on the planet. The solution is equally simple: buy less. And if you do need to buy something, look for eco-friendly alternatives.

## shopping facts

- The equivalent of 30kg of energy, raw materials and packaging are used to make every kilogramme of products we buy. • Australians used 3.9 billion plastic bags in 2006. (But there’s some good news: that was down from 5.95 billion in 2002.) • Half of household rubbish by volume is packaging.

## shopping: key steps

**1 Borrow or share it.** Get books from a library, hire tools and DVDs, and set up a

tool sharing scheme with neighbours. \$ □

**2 Buy things that last.** Buy quality and avoid disposable products. □

**3 Buy local.** Shop locally (so you travel less) and buy locally produced goods (so they travel less). □

**4 Buy from green retailers.** It helps them grow (see Section 4: Resources and [www.ecodirectory.com.au](http://www.ecodirectory.com.au)). □

**5 Buy recycled products.** Otherwise there's no incentive to recycle. □

**6 Buy second-hand.** Explore your local charity shops, local classifieds, garage sales, [www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au), etc. \$ □

want to do more?

#### what a waste!

The average Australian household spends more than \$1000 a year on things that they don't actually use.

**Shop online:** postal delivery or delivery rounds involve less transport than every customer driving to a shop. □ Get and give unwanted items for **free** on [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org). \$ □

#### reduce packaging

Avoid **overpackaged** items. □ Buy fresh food instead of tins, jars and packets. \$ □ Put **fruit and vegetables** loose into your shopping trolley then into a reusable bag. □ Use **reusable bags** instead of plastic bags. □ Shop in stores that will let you **refill** or bring your own containers. □ Buy **bulk** sizes. \$ □ Buy items with packaging you know you can **recycle**. □ Download **music** instead of buying CDs. □

# 13 holidays

The biggest environmental problem with going on holiday is getting there.

In particular, flying produces a lot of greenhouse gas emissions – in fact, it may be the single most harmful thing that you can do

to the environment.

The simple answer: holiday closer to home.

## holiday facts

- One Sydney-London return flight generates the same amount of greenhouse gas emissions as driving a typical urban car for 15,000km, or one and a half years (source: [www.chooseclimate.org](http://www.chooseclimate.org)).

## holidays: key steps

**1 Fly less.** Holiday nearer home. Australia is blessed with natural wonders, sunshine, great places to stay and the world's best beaches. ☐ Travel by train. ☐ If you must fly, offset your flight's carbon emissions (see Section 4: Resources). ☐

**2 Support ethical tourism.** If you do go overseas find eco-sensitive operators who work with local communities: tourism in poor countries often excludes or exploits local communities while damaging the environment ([www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)). ☐

## want to do more?

Take a **hike**: wilderness starts where the road ends so get away from traffic to experience nature ([www.bushwalkingaustralia.org](http://www.bushwalkingaustralia.org)). ☐ Ask hotels not to change **linen and towels** every day. Laundry can use up to 40 per cent of a hotel's energy and water. ☐ Don't buy **souvenirs and gifts** made from coral, ivory, tropical hardwood or endangered animals. ☐ Spend a few days on a **conservation project** ([www.conservationvolunteers.com.au](http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au)). ☐ Stay and work on an **organic farm** (Willing Workers on Organic Farms; [www.woof.com.au](http://www.woof.com.au)). ☐ Have fun and explore green living at a **sustainable festival**. ☐ Support **Aboriginal tourism**. You can learn about indigenous culture and its relationship to the land, and it can help Aboriginal communities preserve cultural heritage ([www.aboriginaltourism.com.au](http://www.aboriginaltourism.com.au)). ☐

**organisations** Ecotourism Australia  
([www.ecotourism.org.au](http://www.ecotourism.org.au))

**books** Code Green (Kerry Lorimer)

# 14 money

The money we put into bank accounts, shares and superannuation is lent as capital to finance business – including businesses doing the wrong thing by the environment. To ensure your money isn't used to harm the planet, switch your superannuation, savings or shares to ethical (or “socially responsible”) investment funds.

## money facts

- In 2005, \$7.67 billion was invested in ethical funds in Australia – compared to \$325 million in 2000.

## money: key steps

**1 Make your super and shares ethical.** Talk to an ethical investment broker or see if your company/industry super fund has an ethical option. Ethical investments work just like normal funds, except they screen out companies engaged in socially or environmentally harmful activities. (The exact

criteria varies from fund to fund.) Studies suggest ethical investments perform as well as or above average. The Ethical Investment Association website ([www.eia.org.au](http://www.eia.org.au)) lists ethical brokers and funds. ☐

## want to do more?

Support **shareholder campaigns** to persuade firms you invest in to become greener ([www.ethical.shares.green.net.au](http://www.ethical.shares.green.net.au)). ☐ Write to your bank and tell them you would like them to introduce an ethically invested bank account. ☐ Join **community-trading** networks such as local exchange trading systems ([www.lets.org.au](http://www.lets.org.au)). ☐

**organisations** The Ethical Investment Association  
([www.eia.org.au](http://www.eia.org.au))

**books** The Ethical Investor (Anne-Marie Spagnolo)

# 15... and more

You can apply green principles to all aspects of life. For example...

## christmas, birthdays, parties

Buy fair trade **gifts** from an online eco-store (see Section 4: Resources) or give something non-material such as a massage voucher, or a football or theatre ticket. Or why not give your time instead – how about a babysitting or decorating “voucher”?  Serve organic, locally sourced **food**.  Reuse Christmas **decorations**.  Tie presents with ribbon, not sticky tape, so **wrapping paper** can be reused.  Buy charity **cards** and recycle them – or email an online e-card.  Use compostable paper **plates** or real crockery.  Add some vegetable kebabs and veggie burgers to your **barbecue** repertoire.

## weddings

Hire your wedding **dress** or buy it second-hand

– it’s probably only been worn once.  Send email **invitations**.  Organise **car-pooling** for guests.  Serve organic, local **food and wine**.  Use biodegradable **confetti**.  Have a green **wedding list** at an online eco-store (see Section 4: Resources).  **Honeymoon** nearer home – spend the travel savings on extra luxury instead.  See Flowers, below.

## flowers

Buy organic or native flowers, preferably locally grown – cut flowers can use a lot of synthetic chemical pesticides and fertilisers.

## outdoor activities

Get **walking** ([www.bushwalkingaustralia.org](http://www.bushwalkingaustralia.org)), but choose routes accessible by public transport.  When **fishing** observe species, size and seasonal restrictions.  Keep **motors** out of the wild: get your thrills mountain-biking, climbing, surfing, kayaking, etc.  Join a local **bushcare** group.

### **pets**

Feed your pet less **meat** ([www.greenpet.com.au](http://www.greenpet.com.au), [www.veganpet.com.au](http://www.veganpet.com.au)). □ Buy **bulk dried food** instead of cans to reduce waste or cook your own pet food (Natural Nutrition for Dogs and Cats; Kymythy Schulze). □ Consider a **smaller** dog or a herbivore pet such as a mouse or guinea pig. □ Put a **bell** on your cat's neck and/or keep it indoors at night to stop it killing native wildlife, and have it desexed to help control the cat population. □ Scoop up **dog poop**. □ Instead of owning a pet join a **wildlife rescue scheme** (see Ch.16 Wildlife & conservation). □

### **retirement**

Use your time and experience to help a **local green group** – it keeps you active and boosts your social life too. □ Keep **active** and healthy by cycling, walking, organic gardening and joining a bushcare group. □

### **... and finally**

Choose to be buried in a **biodegradable coffin** ([www.onearth.com.au](http://www.onearth.com.au)) as cremation releases toxic chemicals. □ Leave something to a green organisation in your **will**. □



# **section 3**

# **green**

# **world**

“ Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. ”

Margaret Mead

# 16 wildlife & conservation

Australia is one of earth's six biodiversity hot spots, with many species found nowhere else on earth. But since Europeans arrived we have the world's worst record of species extinction. Support conservation organisations fighting to change that. And (to repeat a core message of this book) learn to live with less – we must leave space on the planet for other species.

## conservation facts

Land clearing accounts for 15 per cent of Australia's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (and 20 per cent globally). ● World wide, species are becoming extinct at 1000 times the normal rate. ● Since Europeans arrived in Australia 27 species of mammals have become extinct and 92 per cent of the continent's old-growth forest has been destroyed or modified. ● The Federal Government lists 2891 ecosystems and 1595

mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and plants as threatened in Australia.

## wildlife & conservation: key steps

- 1 Join a conservation organisation.** See Section 4: Resources. □
- 2 Plant a tree** on National Tree Day ([www.planetark.com/trees](http://www.planetark.com/trees)). □
- 3 Log out.** Join campaigns to end logging of our old-growth forests (see Section 4: Resources: Green organisations). □
- 4 Dig in.** Join a conservation project ([www.conservationvolunteers.com.au](http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au)) or your local bushcare group. □

## want to do more?

Buy **organic food**. Organic farms support 50 per cent more wildlife than conventional farms. □ Join local campaigns to preserve native **bushland**. □ Volunteer for a local **wildlife rescue** scheme. □

## going native

Introduced animals such as cats and foxes, and plants such as lantana, have flourished in Australia at the expense of native species. See Ch.5 Garden and Ch.15 ...and more: Pets for ways to minimise the damage they do.

see also Ch.5 Garden: create a wildlife-friendly garden.

# 17 social change

We won't save the planet unless we persuade other people – and governments – to act too. Lend your voice to the groundswell of support that is now emerging for decisive action on global warming and the environment.

## social change: key steps

**1 Support a green organisation.** See Section 4: Resources.

**2 Vote green.** That is, vote for politicians you think will put the environment first. In particular, we must elect politicians who will act on global warming.

**3 Think globally, act locally.** Join a local green group raising environmental awareness in your area.

**4 Support a better deal for the world's poor.** Poverty can force people to harm the environment simply to survive. It also means they need more children to support themselves in sickness and old age, fuelling population growth, which is one of the main causes of pressure on the environment. Help farmers in developing nations escape from poverty by buying fair trade products such as coffee or chocolate (The Fair Trade Association; [www.fta.org.au](http://www.fta.org.au)) and supporting campaigns for fairer world trade (Oxfam; [www.oxfam.org.au](http://www.oxfam.org.au)).

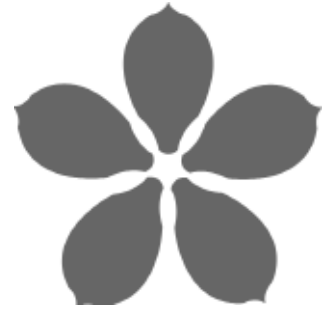
## want to do more?

Propose green initiatives at your child's school.  **Discuss** environmental issues with

## green world

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family, friends and work colleagues. □ Help support **indigenous and Aboriginal cultures** – they contain thousands of years of knowledge about how to live sustainably with nature; knowledge that is now in danger of being lost for ever. □ Get together with some friends and organise a local **eco-festival**. □ Campaign for a reduction in **arms spending**. In 2006, 2.5 per cent of global GDP, a total of \$1.38 trillion, was spent on weapons. Imagine if that had been spent on developing renewable energy instead. □



# **section 4**

# **resources**

“ We do not inherit the  
earth from our ancestors.  
We borrow it from our children.”  
Navajo saying

**EcoDirectory**

For a more extensive list of green resources go to: [www.ecodirectory.com.au](http://www.ecodirectory.com.au)

**Australian Government**

Australian environmental portal  
[www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au)

Australian Greenhouse Office  
[www.greenhouse.gov.au](http://www.greenhouse.gov.au)

**Green organisations**

Alternative Technology Association  
[www.ata.org.au](http://www.ata.org.au)

Australian Conservation Foundation  
[www.acfonline.org.au](http://www.acfonline.org.au)

Australian Marine Conservation Society  
[www.amcs.org.au](http://www.amcs.org.au)

Clean Up Australia  
[www.cleanup.com.au](http://www.cleanup.com.au)

Climate Action Network Australia  
[www.cana.net.au](http://www.cana.net.au)

Friends of the Earth  
[www.foe.org.au](http://www.foe.org.au)

Greenpeace Australia  
[www.greenpeace.org.au](http://www.greenpeace.org.au)

Green Party  
[www.greens.org.au](http://www.greens.org.au)

Planet Ark  
[www.planetark.org](http://www.planetark.org)

Wilderness Society  
[www.wilderness.org.au](http://www.wilderness.org.au)

WWF  
[www.wwf.org.au](http://www.wwf.org.au)

**State environment organisations**

Canberra Environment Centre  
[www.ecoaction.com.au](http://www.ecoaction.com.au)

Nature Conservation Council of NSW  
[www.nccnsw.org.au](http://www.nccnsw.org.au)

Environment Centre Northern Territory  
[www.ecnt.org](http://www.ecnt.org)

Queensland Conservation Council  
[www.qccqld.org.au](http://www.qccqld.org.au)

Tasmanian Conservation Trust

[www.tct.org.au](http://www.tct.org.au)

Conservation Council of South Australia

[www.ccsa.asn.au](http://www.ccsa.asn.au)

Environment Victoria

[www.envict.org.au](http://www.envict.org.au)

Conservation Council of Western Australia

[www.conservationwa.asn.au](http://www.conservationwa.asn.au)

### Green electricity

GreenPower [www.greenpower.gov.au](http://www.greenpower.gov.au)

### Recycling

Recycling Near You [www.recyclingnearyou.com.au](http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au)

### Online green stores

Biome [www.biome.com.au](http://www.biome.com.au)

EcoAtHome [www.ecoathome.com.au](http://www.ecoathome.com.au)

EcoShop [www.ecoshop.com.au](http://www.ecoshop.com.au)

Natural Base [www.naturalbase.com.au](http://www.naturalbase.com.au)

Environment Shop [www.environmentshop.com.au](http://www.environmentshop.com.au)

Everything Organic [www.everythingorganic.com.au](http://www.everythingorganic.com.au)

Neco [www.neco.com.au](http://www.neco.com.au)

Planet Ark Direct [www.planetarkdirect.com](http://www.planetarkdirect.com)

Todae [www.todae.com.au](http://www.todae.com.au)

### Magazines

Earth Garden [www.earthgarden.com.au](http://www.earthgarden.com.au)

G [www.gmagazine.com.au](http://www.gmagazine.com.au)

CleanFood organic [www.cleanfood.com.au](http://www.cleanfood.com.au)

ReNew [www.ata.org.au](http://www.ata.org.au)

### Online magazines

ecoLogic [www.ecologicmedia.com](http://www.ecologicmedia.com)

Treehugger [www.treehugger.com](http://www.treehugger.com)

### Books

● **Green living** Greenology (Tanya Ha), Sustainable Living for Dummies (Michael Grosvenor)

● **Climate change** Greenhouse Solutions with Sustainable Energy (Mark Diesendorf), Heat: How to Stop the Planet Burning (George Monbiot), The Last Generation (Fred Pearce), Rough Guide to Climate Change (Robert Henson), The Weather Makers (Tim Flannery),

## resources

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- **General Affluenza** (Clive Hamilton), **Sacred Balance** (David Suzuki), **Going Native** (Mike Archer and Bob Beale)

These and other green books are available from [www.planetarkdirect.com](http://www.planetarkdirect.com).

### **Carbon offsets**

You can pay companies to “offset” your CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by, for instance, planting trees to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> or installing energy saving devices in other homes, so you are “carbon neutral”. But try to reduce your own emissions as much as you can first, before offsetting. And note that tree planting is not the best way to offset CO<sub>2</sub> because it takes time for trees to grow and it is hard to monitor.

Carbon Neutral [www.carbonneutral.com.au](http://www.carbonneutral.com.au)

Carbon Planet [www.carbonplanet.com](http://www.carbonplanet.com)

Climate Friendly [www.climatefriendly.com](http://www.climatefriendly.com)

Climate Positive [www.climatepositive.org](http://www.climatepositive.org)

Easy Being Green [www.easybeinggreen.com.au](http://www.easybeinggreen.com.au)

Elementree [www.elementree.com.au](http://www.elementree.com.au)

Greenfleet [www.greenfleet.com.au](http://www.greenfleet.com.au)

(These websites also have calculators to help you see how much CO<sub>2</sub> you emit from different activities.)

# Planet Ark

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Planet Ark's aim is to show people and business the many ways that they can reduce their daily impact on the environment – at home, at work and in the community.

Set up in 1991 as an Australian not-for-profit organisation, Planet Ark achieves its goals by forming partnerships with corporate, government, industry and community bodies to run environmental education campaigns and events such as National Tree Day, The National Plastic Bag Reduction Campaign, Cartridges 4 Planet Ark, Cards 4 Planet Ark and National Recycling Week.

Information services run by Planet Ark include the National Recycling Hotline and [RecyclingNearYou.com.au](http://RecyclingNearYou.com.au), while Planet Ark's Reuters Daily World Environment News Service is one of the world's largest online environmental news services.

Planet Ark's work is also funded by the sale of environmentally responsible products such as laundry powders Planet Ark and Aware, and product endorsements. [PlanetArkDirect.com](http://PlanetArkDirect.com) is an online store selling products that help people reduce their environmental impact.