

A GOOD LIFE

A guide to living lightly



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Introduction

Sustainable Behaviour & Budget Living

What is a Good Life? There are countless ways to answer this one question. Where ever we go, and whatever we do, we have an impact on the environment and world around us. While performing our day-to-day tasks we have the ability to reduce these effects and make considered choices.

Our population is rapidly expanding and as a consequence so is the need for food and resources. In Victoria, energy consumption has doubled since 1973. There are a number of ways we can live and act in a more sustainable manner. Simple behavioural changes can help reduce our energy and water consumption, and these adjustments can deliver additional benefits including reduced household costs and improved comfort. Households can also work toward reducing waste to landfill and increasing their commitment to resource recovery. In addition, everyday purchasing decisions made when buying food and consumables carry an impact on the health and wellbeing of our homes and the wider community.

This Guide is motivated by the idea of living well without large outlay or adversely impacting our surroundings. It is designed to help support you to improve your resource use, live more comfortably and save money.



Reduce Utility Use

Understanding Your Utility Bills & Consumption Patterns

As the saying goes “you can’t manage what you don’t understand”

An important first step towards reducing your energy consumption usually starts with understanding how and when you use power. Utility bills can be confusing. Start by breaking down and understanding the individual components listed on a bill. Separate service fees from energy consumed, premium charges (such as green power) and solar credits (if applicable). If you are not sure of the account structure, ask questions of your energy retailer so you better understand your patterns of use and costs. By understanding the way the information is presented, and what it actually means, you may be able to align patterns of use with cheaper tariffs or look at obtaining a better rate from a supplier. Studying your account can also help pick up billing errors if they DO happen.

Reading Meters

Knowing how to read your meter will allow you to chart your use on a regular basis which can help identify patterns of use and act if anomalies occur.

Most retailers can provide information on how to read your meter. New smart meters (electricity) also enable you to acquire accurate information about your energy use patterns which can help manage your costs. Again, your retailer is best placed to advise you on obtaining your usage details.

The consumption of individual appliances can be measured to identify items that are high energy consumers. You can usually find the typical energy use of an appliance online. Alternatively, you may be able to borrow a measuring device such as an electricity monitor from the local library, sustainability group or Council.

Visit switchon.vic.gov.au to compare your energy consumption with the average Victorian household. On this website you can also discover ways to reduce your household energy consumption.

Compare Energy Retailers

Refer to the Victorian Government's "Your Choice" website (see link below) to help assess retail energy rates and offers currently available. It also provides other useful information including energy facts and valuable material for those thinking of installing solar power.

<http://yourchoice.vic.gov.au/>



Water Bills

Information on how to read your mains water account can be sourced from your water provider. In Indigo Shire, the water provider is North East Water. Go to the following link for information on tariffs, rebates, meters and reading your account.

<http://www.nerwa.vic.gov.au/>

Reduce Energy Use

Modern homes are packed with gadgets and devices that use power. This section is designed to help you identify possible opportunities around the home where energy consumption can be reduced.

Heating & Cooling

Heating and cooling a home can account for a considerable percentage of the average household budget.

Did you know!

- *In 2007 heating was responsible for 58% of Victoria's household energy use.*
- *In Victoria, and similarly across the nation, the proportion of households with an air conditioner in use has almost doubled from 1994 to 2008 (ABS 2008).*
- *Over cooler months, Sustainability Victoria has estimated that each degree the thermostat is increased, the cost of running the heater can increase by as much as 15%.*

Reduce energy demand and stay comfortable by trying these simple suggestions:

- **Dress for the season.** Pull out the woollies in winter and wear lighter clothing in summer.
- **Don't forget to change your bedding seasonally.** Throw on extra blankets when needed in winter rather than reaching for the electric blanket or leaving heating on overnight.
- **Close doors and windows, and draw curtains and blinds to minimise heat movement during summer and winter.** Protect glazed areas from the sun in summer, and restrict heat loss in winter by covering with heavy curtains and pelmets.

- **Open the house overnight to remove unwanted warm air during summer.** Through summer, the overnight outdoor temperature usually drops below the indoor temperature. Consider opening doors and windows overnight to purge the home of built up warm air.
- **Use air movement to keep you cool over summer.** Turn on a fan before reaching for the air conditioner (A/C) controller. Fans are far cheaper to run and it may surprise you how much a little air flow can improve your comfort.
- **Heat and cool only the rooms you use.** Use zoning (close off rooms) to reduce the area to be heated or cooled.
- **Use a programmable thermostat to minimise hours of operation for heaters and air conditioning.**
- **Set heating thermostats between 18-20 degrees through winter.**
- **Set cooling thermostats between 25-27 degrees through summer.**
- **If possible, position outdoor air conditioning equipment in a well shaded area.**
- **Keep heating, air conditioning and cooling units in good condition to optimise operation.** Clean any filters regularly.
- **Small portable electric heaters are generally very energy inefficient.** If you need to use a portable heater, consider running for short periods of time in small well-insulated areas.
- **Turn the pilot light off on gas heaters over summer.**
- **If you have an evaporative cooler, close your ceiling vents over winter to reduce heat loss.**
- **Seek energy efficient models when purchasing any heating and cooling equipment.**



Appliances

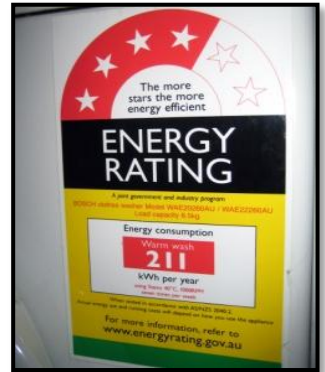
Household appliances, including fridges, computers, washing machines, dryers, and home entertainment systems, also demand significant energy resources. In 2007, appliances comprised 32% of Australia's household energy use. This figure continues to grow as we purchase more and more electrical appliances for our homes.

To lower your energy needs, consider the following tips:

- **When buying new items look for energy and water efficient models.** Size appliances for purpose - bigger is not always better. Larger appliances usually cost more to run, often with little, if any, additional benefit.

Refer to energy rating websites for further assistance on electricity, gas and water rating scheme.

For example: <http://www.energyrating.gov.au/>



- **Ensure fridge/freezer seals are in good working order, and consider location and ventilation for the unit.** The household fridge usually runs all day, every day, all year. As such, it makes good sense to ensure it is operating at its best to minimise operating costs.
 - ✓ Allow air to circulate around unit and locate in a cool, well insulated area.
 - ✓ Regularly defrost a fridge/freezer (excluding those with an automatic defrost). Defrost when the ice is 5mm thick or every 6 months. (CSIRO,2009).
 - ✓ Check the operating temperature of your fridge. Set operating temperatures for fridges to 4°C and for freezers to between -15°C and -18°C. (You may require a special fridge thermometer to check this).
 - ✓ Switch off fridges and freezers when not in use. (For example turn off the “bar fridge” in between parties).

- **If possible, turn OFF appliances at the power points rather than running on “standby”.** Appliances that may unnecessarily consume energy while in standby mode include; televisions, DVD players, video players, radios, stereos, gaming devices, computers, modems, printers, microwaves, battery chargers, and washing machines.

It is estimated that in some homes standby power can be up to 10% of the average electricity bill.

- **Generally a LED or LCD TV will use lower energy than a plasma screen equivalent.** Choose a TV that is size appropriate and avoid having several throughout the home.
- **Turn your hot water supply down to 60°C.** This is hot enough for general household needs and ensures no bacteria builds up in the system. For an instantaneous hot water system, set to 50°C.
- **Reduce hours of use for computers and IT equipment.** If a computer needs to be kept on, use a hibernation/sleep mode rather than screen savers.
- **Clean the lint filters on washing machines, dryers, and heating and cooling equipment to ensure more efficient operation.**
- **Use rechargeable batteries** - Save money and reduce waste!
- **If you have an “off-peak” power tariff, operate appliances during discounted periods to save money.** For example running the dishwashers and washing machines overnight.

Cooking

Changing the way you prepare food and using energy efficient cooking appliances can reduce power use.

Consider the following suggestions when cooking meals:

- **Use gas, microwaves, and fan forced functions on ovens in preference to standard electric cooking equipment.**
- **Cook outdoors in warm weather, this will help reduce any heat building up inside the home.**
- **Cut vegies into smaller pieces so they cook faster.**

- Use pressure cookers to reduce cooking time and energy use.
- Place lids on your saucepans to reduce heat loss and accelerate the cooking process.
- Only boil enough water in the kettle to meet your needs.
- Don't over boil. It takes less energy to keep liquid at boiling point, than it does to bring it to the boil. So once you have a rolling boil and the food has been added, turn the burner down to simmer.
- Minimise the number of times you open the doors of ovens, fridges and freezers.
- Reduce cooking times by thawing frozen food in the fridge beforehand.
- Consider cooking in bulk and freezing.



Lighting

- Use natural light where possible.
- Turn off lights when not in use.
- Use task specific lighting. For example using a lamp to read by is often more efficient than illuminating the entire room.
- When replacing globes seek energy efficient LED or CFL (Compact Fluorescent Light) technology.



Garden

- Use a rake, broom, or hand operated equipment for garden maintenance instead of electric equipment. This can save you money and provide great exercise.

Laundry

- **Use a clothes line in preference to running a clothes dryer.** If you have to use a clothes dryer, clean the lint filter each time to ensure efficient drying.
- **A front-loading washing machine typically draws less power than a top-loading equivalent. Equally front-loading machines can use up to 50% less water than a top-loading machine.** Wait for full loads before washing and select cold water to save more energy.

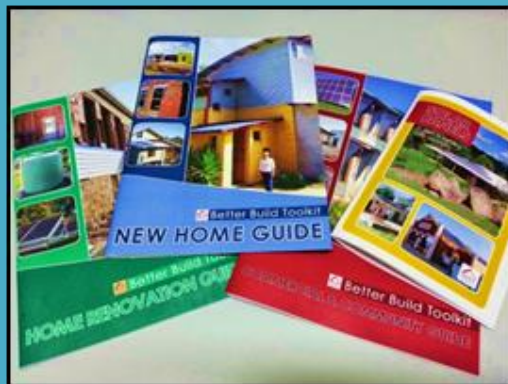


Refer to Indigo Shire's "Better Build Toolkit" to access introductory information on ways to improve the energy efficiency of your home.

<http://www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au/toolkit>

For those seeking information on installing solar power check out Indigo's "Solar Guide".

<http://www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au/solar>



Reduce Water Use

Water is a precious resource and it should be conserved where possible. In most households, the majority of water consumption occurs in the bathroom and laundry. Considerable water is also used in the garden for maintenance and irrigation. It takes substantial energy to produce high quality mains drinking water. Avoid using mains water for jobs where reused or recycled water (rainwater tanks or grey-water) are suitable. Equally avoid pouring chemicals into drains and waterways.

Did you know one in three Victorian households has a rainwater tank and around half of all households are using either grey-water, recycled water or both.

General

- **Ensure that you identify and repair water leaks immediately.**

Bathroom/Laundry

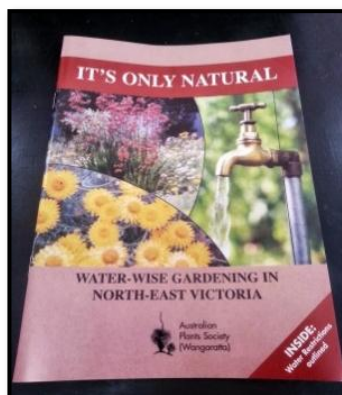
- **Fit a water efficient shower head.**
- **Reduce the time spent in the shower.** 4 minutes or less. (Note: Showers are preferable to baths when aiming to reduce water use).
- **Wash the kids together.** It saves water and they will have more fun!
- **Wash your pets in a basin, bucket or small tub.**
- **Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.**
- **Reuse “grey-water”.**

Please note: Household waste-water (except kitchen sink and toilet water) may be suitable for tasks such as garden irrigation and toilet flushing. A simple diverter can redirect grey-water for further reuse. Untreated grey-water must be used within a 24 hour period due to the risk of bacterial growth. It is also wise to use environmentally friendly powders and liquids if considering water reuse on the garden to avoid harming plants.

Gardens

- **Plant a drought tolerant garden and select drought tolerant lawn seed varieties.**

- **Water plants more thoroughly in preference to frequently.**
- **Spread a thick layer of mulch to reduce water evaporation and suppress weeds.** There are several varieties of mulch available including shredded bark, straw, stone, and leaves.
- **Avoid watering during the heat of the day.** Water your garden in the early morning or early evening to reduce evaporation. A drip system and timers can also reduce water wastage. If possible, use rainwater or grey-water to irrigate gardens.
- **Target the root zone of the plants rather than the leaves.**
- **Sweep driveways and footpaths with a broom, rather than using a hose or an electric blower.**
- **Use composting to improve soil quality.**
- **Remove weeds that compete for water and nutrients.** Avoid using herbicides, weed by hand, or use boiling water or a vinegar spray.
- **Water wise gardening.** Check out “Water wise gardening in North East Victoria”. This booklet offers an introduction to growing water and weed tolerant gardens and focuses on native plant varieties found in North East Victoria.



http://www.nerwa.vic.gov.au/about/communications/publications/images/Garden_brochure_final.pdf

Kitchens

- **Wait until the dishwasher is full and choose an “eco” setting if available.**
- **Avoid running water to rinse fruit, vegetables or dishes.** Partially fill the sink or use a container so that the water can be reused on the garden and scrap dirty plates.
- **Collect and reuse cold water when waiting for the tap to run hot.** This water can be used to rinse food, dishes or in the garden.



Resource Recovery - less waste more resources

Australians have a strong reliance on landfill to manage waste. Landfills are unsightly, expensive to run, take up valuable land, can leach harmful substances into the water table, and may generate odours and undesirable waste gases (particularly methane). Landfill does not offer an ideal long term solution to waste management and should be considered a last resort. As such, we should always strive to keep our waste to a minimum.

Top waste reduction tips include:

- **Avoid products with unnecessary packaging and use reusable bags in preference to single use shopping bags.**
- **Purchase goods in bulk to reduce packaging.**
- **Separate and recycle waste** – Separate waste into recyclables, organics, and general, then dispose of each group in a suitable manner.
- **Reuse plastic storage containers.**
- **Plan and pack waste free lunches.** Avoid using plastic wrapping films - invest in a lunch box instead.
- **Use a water bottle.** Although plastic bottles are recyclable, many end up in landfill and can take up to 1000 years to break down. Over 90% of the cost of a bottle of water can be traced back to the bottle, lid and label. You can save all of that money by simply drinking tap water in a reusable container.
- **Recycle for a cause.** There are many existing programs that accept goods for recycling, often with charitable outcomes which help support the wider community. Seek options to recycle print cartridges, eyewear, mobile phones, corks, aluminium cans, IT equipment, sporting equipment, cameras, bicycles and batteries. Donate unwanted goods and clothing to Opportunity (OP) shops.



- Support “Community Garage Sales” and “Trash & Treasure” markets.
- Reduce paper waste by requesting electronic payslips, newsletters and bills.
- Reuse gift boxes, gift bags, wrapping paper and ribbons when possible.
- Avoid sending organic waste material to general landfill. Compost suitable material on-site, feed kitchen scraps to chickens, use an organic or green waste disposal service (if available).

Compost and worm farms

Almost 50% of municipal waste is organic matter such as food scraps which could be composted. Compost is rotting organic matter that is consumed by worms, bacteria and/or fungi.

Benefits of composting include:

- It is inexpensive and easy.
- Reduces waste sent to landfill.
- Improves soil health, structure and ability to hold water.
- Increases disease resistance in plants.
- Reduces dependence on artificial fertilisers and pesticides.

Examples of composting systems include compost bins, compost heaps, worm farms, bokashi units and urban composters. Follow the instructions provided with your system.

Alternately, if you are ‘resting’ a vegetable plot, you may be able to dispose of organic material directly into a freshly dug hole and cover.

Worm farms take fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grindings, tea leaves, paper, and damp cardboard. Avoid onions and acidic fruits such as citrus (lemons, limes, oranges, mandarins and grapefruit) and pineapple.





For further information on waste reduction check out the following resources:

Halwaste

Public education program developed for the greater Albury region to improve community awareness of waste reduction and recycling.

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

“Guide to Home Composting”

<http://www.halwaste.com.au/PDFs/Guide%20to%20Home%20Composting.pdf>

Sustainability Victoria Waste Reduction programs

<http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/>

Purchasing

Buyers are often presented with a number of competing criteria when purchasing. These may include: cost, product durability, reparability, length of warranty, life span and total embodied energy.

Top tips for improving the sustainability of your shopping trolley:

- **Say no to shopping bags.** Remember to take your own bags when going shopping. Australians use 3.92 billion plastic bags a year (2007), that's over 10 million new bags being used every day.
- **Avoid products with excessive packaging, buy in bulk where appropriate and avoid disposable containers.**
- **Investigate longer lasting, energy, fuel and water efficient goods and appliances.** For example compact fluorescent and LED lighting.
- **Encourage suppliers to ship materials in reusable containers.**
- **Avoid using products and materials that have been treated with hazardous chemicals or release high levels of toxic fumes.** For example, avoid using paints, carpets, finishes and fabrics etc. that release high levels of Volatile Organic Compounds, (VOC's) which can be harmful to your health.
- **Save paper by placing a "No Junk Mail" sign on your letterbox.** Subscribe to an online catalogue instead.
- **Purchase from sources that are less polluting or use clean technology.**



- **Seek goods with recycled content or consider second hand merchandise.** Second hand goods are often available at a reduced price. Explore salvage yards, charity shops and various online platforms such as Trading Post, Ebay, Gumtree, for requirements.
- **Ask yourself “...do I really need to buy multiple or expensive gifts for the kids?” Some Experts say children really just want to spend time with you and feel loved and valued.**
- **Look for products with “eco” and “ethical” labels.** Environmental, ethical, and sustainability claims are very easy to make but can be much harder to substantiate. Look for products with credible labels to support your purchasing decision. For further information check out Eco Buys “Eco- Find”. <http://ecobuy.org.au/>
- **Buy and eat local, seasonal products.**

Considerable energy is used to transport food from the:

grower → processor → retailer → home!

Identify suppliers and producers in your area. Regional “Buy or Shop Local” guides and websites can help identify options available within your community. Also, consider community or farmer’s markets in your area to source regional produce.

Growing your own fruit and vegetables. Keep your “food miles” and environmental impacts low by growing your own produce. Benefits include; easy access to fresh produce, money saving, and improving your nutritional



intake. Planting can be on a scale appropriate to your circumstances from pots up to numerous garden beds.

- Stagger planting to extend crop harvest.
- Enrich the soil with compost or use a quality soil mix to improve plant health and improve water retention.
- Research and use organic pest control.
- Reduce waste by picking only what you need.
- Use rainwater to cut down on the consumption of mains (potable) water.
- Choose seasonal and climate appropriate varieties.
- If space is not available at home, participate in community gardens operating in your area. Community gardens can connect like-minded people and offer a valuable source of advice and social interaction.
- Preserve, freeze or dehydrate excess produce. Alternatively, offer any surplus to food swaps and food relief programs operating in your area.



Food for Thought

The food we eat has an impact on our environment as well as our personal health. The global food system — production, to consumption, and waste — contributes up to one third of all greenhouse gas emissions. Making informed and responsible decisions about what we eat can have important and beneficial effects on our health and wellbeing, as well as the future of our planet.

Taking a sustainable and healthy approach to food requires understanding of the consumption process as a whole, including growing, processing, purchasing, cooking and our daily nutritional requirements. Refer to the Eat for Health – Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013, Dept of Health and Aging, for healthy food intake and ratios.

Avoid foods that are weighed down with preservatives or artificial colourings and flavours. After all, we are what we eat.

Here are some simple tips for improving nutrition, while considering the welfare of our environment:

1. **Eat the rainbow!** Nutritionists know that this is sound advice because diverse colours of fruits and vegetables are signs of varied nutrient content — just what our bodies need to thrive.
2. **Where possible, buy organic foods.** When you choose organic-certified products or sustainably grown food, you are supporting production methods that are better for the planet.
3. **Consider meat being the side dish and introduce vegetarian options into your diet.** Source meat and seafood from local, ethical and sustainable suppliers and monitor intake for both health and environmental perspectives.



4. **Cook in big batches.** A great way to reduce food waste, save time and make planning easier is to cook large batches of a single meal, such as soups or curries. These can then be frozen and reused at a later time. Preparing large amounts of food at one time saves energy during cooking, while freezing helps prevent nutrient loss in fruits and vegetables.
5. **Be creative and share joy.** One of the great joys of real food is cooking and eating with friends and family. Conviviality, joyful and friendly interaction is found at farmers' markets and around the dinner table. This supports healthy relationships and healthy bodies.
6. **Drink plenty of water.** Staying hydrated can help cleanse your body and maintain normal digestive / metabolic function. This is also a healthy substitute for high-calorie options such as fizzy drinks, juices and alcohol. Keep a refillable water bottle with you or a glass of water at your desk. Invest in a filter rather than purchasing bottled water.
7. **Learn to cook from scratch.** It is healthier than reaching for convenience or fast food alternatives.

*List adapted from: <http://grist.org/food/on-earth-ways-to-eat-with-the-planet-in-mind/>
and <http://foodtank.org/>*



Reduce Chemical Use In & Around the Home

A healthy home is one which does no harm to the wellbeing of its inhabitants or the environment. Many of the health issues we face today may be caused or aggravated by our indoor environment, as well as the chemicals and equipment used around the home. Research shows the indoor environment can contain up to 5 times the level of pollutants and toxins that the outdoor environment does. As such we should be mindful of the type of products and chemicals we bring into our homes. Indoor plants can be used to improve air quality by acting as natural air filters. They can help reduce airborne pollutants and off-gassing from computers, materials and finishes, while replenishing oxygen levels. Look for indoor species that suit your lighting and care requirements. In addition, regularly ventilate rooms to reduce toxic build-up. In addition, regularly ventilate rooms to reduce toxic build-up.

To further reduce the use of chemicals within the home environment explore natural ingredients to meet cleaning, body care and pest control needs. There are many substitutes available that have a lighter impact on the environment and our health, and many can be readily found in the cupboard or pantry.

When addressing pest control start by:

- Removing all insect attractants.
- Investigating plants which are insect repelling.
- Exploring organic pesticides before using chemical alternatives.

Basic greener household options may include:

- **Pure soap and water to disinfect & clean.**
- **Bicarbonate of soda** as an all-purpose cleaner, stain remover, and deodoriser.
- **White vinegar** to cut through grease & clean glass.
- **Essential oils.** Such as; Eucalyptus oil for spot cleaning & disinfection. Oil of cloves for use as a mould inhibitor. Tea tree and Lavender oil are known for their healing, disinfecting and insect repelling properties. Peppermint oil is also an insect repellent.
- Remove mould by rubbing with a **lemon**. Alternatively try a **borax-bicarb** mix, with a drop of essential oil.

- **Lemon juice** to cut grease and disinfect.
- **Beeswax** polish, **olive** or **linseed** oil for wood & furniture.
- **Sunshine** to whiten fabrics & kill bacteria.
- Camphor wood balls, **cedarwood oil** or sachets with a mix of **lavender**, **cloves**, **mint** and/or **rosemary** in wardrobes can help discourage moths.
- **Bay leaves** in bags of rice and flour to deter weevils and silverfish.
- Burn **citronella** candles and plant **sweet basil** to repel mosquitos. Also avoid bodies of stagnant water in the garden.

Always use products as instructed and test for suitability.



Economical Driving

Vehicle use is often a large component of the average person's environmental impact. The purchase and operation of a car can also make a sizable dent in the household budget. As an alternative to using your vehicle consider; walking, riding a bike or taking public transport. These alternate methods of transport are better for the environment, provide exercise, and deliver considerable health benefits. If you have school aged children, investigate whether your area has a "walking school bus" program. It will help to avoid school drop-off and pick-up congestion while providing exercise and fresh air for your family.

When a motor vehicle is required to perform day-to-day activities, remember these simple tips to improve driving efficiency.

Ten tips for eco-efficient driving:

1. **Avoid hard accelerating and braking.** According to TravelSMART, less aggressive driving can reduce fuel consumption by up to 30% and minimise wear and tear on your vehicle.
2. **Avoid areas and times of heavy traffic congestion to minimise 'stop-start' driving.** Traffic interruptions account for about 40% of average fuel consumption in city driving.
3. **Avoid short trips wherever possible and plan ahead to combine multiple errands.**
4. **Car-pool where possible.** Network with friends and colleagues to save fuel.
5. **Most vehicles do not need to be 'warmed up' except in very cold conditions or after long periods of non-use.**
6. **Clear out clutter from boots and back seats.** Every 50 kilograms of extra weight carried in a typical car increases fuel consumption by about 2%.
7. **Minimise wind resistance.** The faster you drive, the greater the wind resistance and fuel consumption. Remove roof racks and other external attachments when not needed. Opening sunroofs and windows will also significantly increase fuel consumption at higher speeds.
8. **Air-conditioning can increase fuel consumption by 5–10% but it is more efficient than an open window at speeds of more than 80 km/h.** While an

air-conditioner does need to be used regularly to avoid leaks and operation problems, avoid running it all the time. Use the air vents instead.

9. **Keep tyres inflated to the highest recommended pressure.** Under-inflated tyres reduce fuel-efficiency. Optimum inflation will also increase tyre life and improve handling.
10. **Keep your vehicle well-maintained for optimum performance.**

(Source:<http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/transport/fuelguide/tips.html>)

If considering the purchase of a new vehicle check out the “Green Vehicle Guide” to compare information on various makes and models based on greenhouse and air pollution emissions.

For further information refer to the Australian Government’s Green Vehicle Guide website.

<http://www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au/GVGPublicUI/home.aspx>



Green Travel

Everyone deserves to enjoy a holiday from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. When planning a break here are a few tips that help us to travel as a responsible tourist.

- **Seek green accommodation venues, businesses and events.**
 - Eco Tourism Australia, an incorporated non-profit organisation, is the peak national body for the ecotourism and sustainable tourism industry. It can connect traveller with eco certified operations. For further information refer to <http://www.greentravelleaders.com.au/> .
 - Search for camping equipment manufacturers, businesses or accommodation with a Gumnut Award. These operations have made a commitment to supporting responsible tourism and have taken steps to minimise their environmental impacts across a number of criteria. Refer to <http://www.gumnutawards.com.au/> for additional information.
- **If sightseeing, consider a walking tour or catch public transport if available. Alternatively swap four wheels for two and cycle to various attractions.**
- **Reuse or recycle brochures and tourist information.** Take only what you need and reuse and recycle where possible.
- **If you need to rent a car, rent the smallest one that fits your purpose. Try a hybrid vehicle.**
- **When staying in accommodation reuse towels rather than having freshly laundered ones each day.**
- **Take a reusable water bottle if heading out for the day.** Also pack a reusable coffee cup so you can enjoy coffee breaks without the need for a disposable cup. Several brands produce standard sizes compatible with espresso machines and are welcomed at many coffee outlets.
- **Use rechargeable batteries for your camera and travel equipment.**



- **Contribute to a community by taking a volunteer holiday.** These holidays offer a unique way to immerse yourself in a new environment and the rewards can be enormous.
- **When going away on holidays consider turning off the hot water service and select appliances including fridge and freezers, if possible.** Holidays can be a good time to do a fridge defrost. Leave the fridge door open to prevent mould growth.

Tips for camping

- **Use biodegradable and chemical free detergents and products that are not harmful to the environment you have entered.**
- **Don't take anything from a National Park except what you have brought in.**
- **Don't feed wildlife. It can be harmful to their wellbeing and encourage undesired behaviour.**
- **Avoid disposable plates and cutlery.**
- **Try citronella candles and natural repellents instead of toxic chemical insect repellents, especially if swimming in natural water ways or holes.** Also cover up appropriately at times of the day when insects are most active.
- **Minimise site disturbance and remove all rubbish and debris you have created.**
- **Separate waste into different waste containers.** Sites may have waste separation systems and bins available for recycling, green, composting and general waste. If you can't see waste disposal systems available take it home or ask managers as the options may not be obvious.
- **Be mindful of water and energy consumption at holiday and caravan parks.** You may have paid your fees but conservation is everybody's responsibility. You can choose to have a short shower and when it comes to power, if you are not using it, turn it off. Remember, water is a precious resource and energy is often sourced from non-renewable sources.

Links & Resources

Australian Greenhouse Calculator

Answer questions on various aspects of your lifestyle and calculate your greenhouse gas emissions.

<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/AGC/calculator/index.html>

Australian Community Foods

Australian Community Foods is dedicated to supporting local, seasonal, ethical food networks.

<http://www.communityfoods.org.au/home>

Australian Conservation Foundation, Greenhome Program, Sustainable Living

Environmental Education program for communities and individuals covering many environmental and sustainability issues.

<http://www2.acfonline.org.au/>

E3 Equipment Energy Efficiency

Government site focused on improving energy efficiency of appliances and products. The site features many programs including energy rating labelling to allow consumers to compare products.

<http://www.energyrating.gov.au>

Eco Directory

One-stop-shop for sustainable, eco, green, ethical and fair trade products, services, businesses and events plus campaigns, non-profit organisations, information, blogs, news and more.

<http://ecodirectory.com.au/>

Ecoportal

Sustainable living information and events for communities across North East Victoria and Southern NSW.

<http://www.ecoportal.net.au/>

EcoSpecifier

Developed by the RMIT University's Centre for Design this is a guide to selection of materials on an environmentally preferred basis. The web site helps evaluate life cycles of materials and the sourcing of greener products.

<http://www.ecospecifier.org>

Ecological Footprint calculators (Global Footprint Networks)

Take a few moments to answer some questions and determine your ecological footprint and the areas of biggest resource consumption with your lifestyle

<http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/>

Green It Yourself

A free video based resource to providing step by step instructions on how to improve the energy efficiency of your home.

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

Greenpower

Over 90% of electricity is still generated from fossil fuels, depleting resources and creating pollution. Purchasing certified green power is one way of reducing environmental impacts from electricity production and show support for the renewable energy sector

<http://www.greenpower.gov.au/>

Green Vehicle Guide

If considering the purchase of a new vehicle check out “Green Vehicle Guide” to compare information on various makes and models based on greenhouse and air pollution emissions.

<http://www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au/GVGPublicUI/home.aspx>

Living Green

Australian Government site, administered by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, with information on how-to's, rebates and sustainable living.

<http://www.livinggreener.gov.au>

Planet Ark

Australian not-for-profit organisation that aims to work with people and business to teach them the simple ways in which they can reduce their impact on the planet, at home, at work and in the community.

<http://planetark.org/>

Resource Smart (Sustainability Victoria)

The ResourceSmart website was designed to present the programs, services and information created by Sustainability Victoria

<http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au>

Safer Solutions, Keeping your home healthy and green.

This site has many useful tips on how to reduce hazardous chemicals around your home. Check out the Safer Solution Easy Guide.

<http://www.saferolutions.org.au>

The Green Directory

Online resource for locating green business, services and products.

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

Transition Towns

The global concept encourages communities to actively initiate small scale projects in local response to the worldwide challenges of climate change, economic hardship and shrinking supplies of cheap energy. Together, these small-scale responses support the transition to a low energy future and demonstrate the way forward for governments, business and the wider community.

<http://www.transitionnetwork.org/>

Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) Scheme

Australia's water efficiency labelling scheme that allows consumers to compare products that use water.

<http://www.waterrating.gov.au/index.html>

Water Footprint

Water calculator and water use figures for a number of everyday goods

<http://www.waterfootprint.org/?page=files/home>

<http://www.waterfootprint.org/?page=cal/WaterFootprintCalculator>



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Disclaimer: Indigo Shire Council has attempted to ensure that information in this guide is as accurate and up-to-date as possible at the time of publication. The authors have no control over the contents of websites listed which may change over time. While every effort has been made to produce a useful publication it may not be error free and appropriate for all purposes.

Top tips to reduce our everyday impact

1. **Stop Junk Mail** – you can request and view deals online instead
2. **Drink Tap Water** – choose a safe reusable drink bottle and top up when you need
3. **Reduce Your Waste** – The 4 R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Refuse.

Minimise – use less and conserve more.

Maximise – use it UP, wear it OUT

4. **Conserve Energy**
5. **Conserve Water**
6. **Choose Greener Transport Options** - walk, ride your bike, use public transport, carpool.
7. **Source Organic, Locally Grown Supplies**
8. **Reduce Chemical Use Around the Home** – including cleaning and personal care.
9. **Lead by Example**
10. **Be Part of Your Community** – connect, share, enjoy, and support those who live with you and around you.
11. **Prioritise – Make times for what really matters, don't waste time, money, resources on what doesn't**
Spend quality time with your family – there is nothing as amazing as strong, healthy and happy families.

Enjoy!

