



Festive Season Green Guide

The festive season, spanning Christmas, New Year and Australia Day, is a time for family, friends, holidays, presents and lots of food! During this busy period Australians travel more, eat more, drink more and buy more than at any other time of the year. This also means we have a bigger impact on the environment now than at any other time of the year.

There are lots of simple things you can do to have a fun and a green festive season. Some of them will also save you money. Check out the information in this guide for tips on: recycling at events and parties; giving green gifts; re-using cards and wrapping paper; reducing your water and energy use; and lots more.



Shop For the Planet



Over the festive season it's easy to get into a shopping frenzy, however everything we buy represents an investment in energy and water, and an output of greenhouse gases. There are lots of clever ways to give presents that show friends, family and colleagues that you care for them and for the planet. They may well save you money too.

- Reduce waste by making a list and checking it twice... before you go food or Christmas shopping. Are you really going to use that extra box of mince pies? Financially and environmentally it's better to buy more later if you need it, than to waste what you have too much of.
- Choose goods that aren't over-packaged to minimize what you'll need to dispose of and go for toys, electronics or other items that use simplified packaging.
- Support environmental sustainability by choosing products that have been produced using methods and materials that do little or no environmental harm. Look for third party accreditation to ensure the manufacturers claims are true.
- Take your reusable bags with you – to the supermarket and when you're shopping for presents. A back pack, last year's department store bags or even a green bag work just as well as a single use boutique bag for getting your present home. And leave one or two in the car or your bag so they are always on hand.



Green Gifts



When buying presents for your loved ones consider the amount of resources, energy and water that goes into their production as well as the environmental cost of transporting and eventually disposing of them.

You can also think outside the (gift) box for some unique ideas that are sure make a big impact on your loved one but a small impact on the environment.

- Look for practical, quality items that serve a need and will last for a long time.
- Buy items with less packaging and products that can be recycled or reused.
- Look for gifts produced by companies that are working to reduce their impact on the environment.

- Instead of buying someone a physical present, treat them to an experience like a massage, tickets to the theatre or even a day out with you.
- Make your own food - chutney, cakes, or chocolate truffles make great presents.
- Send a locally grown, organic hamper.
- For a gift that grows, give a native tree.
- Look for good quality books in second hand bookshops, or buy a gift of a magazine subscription.
- Gift certificates make a great present as you know the recipient will get something they want or need.
- Charity or environmental donations can make a great present for the right person – checkout oxfam.org.au or wwf.org.au/shop/categories/adoptions for some ideas.
- Buy presents that are environmentally beneficial like a worm farm.
- If you find yourself with a few unwanted gifts, try hosting a swap party at work or with friends. Swap parties involve the free exchange of everything from toys, to clothes, tools and electronics. They are a great form of alternative recycling. To download a swap party guide visit RecyclingWeek.PlanetArk.org/Swap



Batteries Not Included?



Most of us, especially the kids, receive at least one gift each year that requires batteries. Single-use batteries are incredibly wasteful as they take around 50 times more energy to make than is contained in the final product.

- Try to avoid buying gifts that are battery-operated, or at least look for presents that can also run off mains power.
- Buy gifts that are water, solar, wind or hand powered. These include water-powered clocks, solar or hand powered torches or radios, solar mobile chargers and more.
- If batteries are essential then use rechargeable batteries – which represent a better choice for the environment.
- Give a recharger as a gift – parents will love it.
- Remember that you may be able to recycle both single-use and rechargeable batteries. For battery recycling in your area visit RecyclingNearYou.com.au or call 1300 733 712.



It's a Wrap



Wrapping paper and gift cards are abundant in almost every household over the festive season, and more often than not, end up in large piles on the floor destined to be thrown away.

Over 90% of Australian households have access to kerbside recycling collections so ensure that you're putting your used wrapping paper and greeting cards into your household recycling bin.

There are also lots of other clever ways to avoid, use and re-use cards and wrap

- When giving oversized gifts like bicycles, tie a bow around them instead of wrapping them in paper.
- Wrap gifts in old maps, newspapers, Sunday comics or old sheets of music
- Alternatively use brown paper and a colourful bow.
- Kids' artwork is a perfect wrapping for presents to proud grandparents.
- Wrap presents in a new scarf, bandanna, calico bag or tea towel.
- Give gifts in baskets, tins or jars, which can be re-used.
- Save bows, ribbons and paper to reuse next year.
- If you do buy gift-wrap, look for recycled paper options, and avoid using foil-wrap as it isn't recyclable.
- You can make your own gift tags by cutting old cards with pinking shears, punching a hole in the corner, and tying together with string. Write the name and a little note on the inside.
- Make sure you separate your cards and wrapping paper from plastic and foil wraps before putting them in your kerbside collection bins.



Deck the Halls



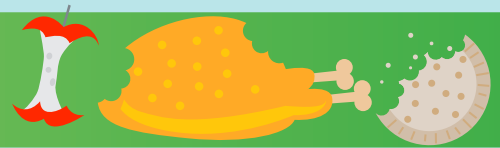
Festivities need decorations, but choose wisely because all that glitters is not necessarily environmentally friendly.

- Buy good quality ornaments that can be re-used for years to come.
- Avoid flimsy, low quality decorations and tinsel that will break or fall apart after a single use.
- Get the kids to make their own decorations and tree ornaments out of materials you already have around the house, or from things they might find in the backyard like twigs, bark, flowers and pine cones.

- Popcorn threaded onto a string can be draped around a Christmas tree, just like tinsel.
- If you buy a live Christmas tree, don't just throw it out after Christmas – have it mulched. Most local authorities have a shredding facility, which means your tree can be recycled as chippings for garden paths and children's playgrounds.
- Use a potted tree.
- If you have an artificial tree, look after it so that it can be re-used year after year.
- If you don't have much storage space think about hiring a tree and decorations.



Eat



This is the time of year for seafood, nibbles, turkey, mince pies, casseroles, roasts, trifle, chocolates, puddings and summer fruits. We consume more over the festive period than at any other time.

Because of the land, fertilizers, water, energy, transport, storage, processing and packaging needed to produce it and get it to us, food has a heavy environmental footprint. Also, when it's sent to landfill it breaks down without oxygen and produces methane, a greenhouse gas with more than 20 times the global warming capacity as carbon dioxide.

We can feast during the festive season and still reduce our environmental impact.

- Cut down on red meat - because so many resources, including land, fertiliser and water, goes into its production red meat has an enormous environmental impact. It takes, for example, about 50,000 litres of water to produce 1kg of beef.
- Avoid overfished fish as these species face extinction. For more information on sustainable seafood please visit MarineConservation.org.au
- Buy organic, free-range, locally produced food and/or native produce to reduce the amount of chemicals, water and energy needed to produce and transport your food to your table.
- Keep food waste to a minimum! The turkey sandwich was invented on Boxing Day, and Christmas pudding tastes just as good re-heated.
- When food has to be disposed of, put it in a compost bin, bokashi bucket or worm farm to reduce the harmful methane emissions that are generated when food scraps decompose in landfill.



Drink



Whether you're stepping out (or staying in) for a celebratory drink this festive reason you can enjoy a tipples and still be green.

- Choose from the increasing range of organic and/or carbon neutral beers and wines.
- Organic wine also makes a nice gift.
- Opt for beer on tap, rather than bottled beer, as it saves on the resources involved in making, transporting and recycling a single-use bottle.
- Remember to recycle all of your glass bottles (and jars), but keep all other kinds of glass out of your home recycling bin, otherwise it will contaminate the good recyclables.
- Aluminium cans and plastic drink bottles also belong in your home recycling bin, just make sure that you remove the lids and remaining liquid from the bottles.
- Corks can also be recycled, for information visit RecyclingNearYou.com.au.



Be Merry



Parties are the cornerstones of this season and you can add a touch of green to your celebrations with a few simple steps.

- Choose eco-friendly decorations like seasonal flowers and bees-wax or soy candles.
- Opt for re-usable plates and cutlery, or alternatively select bamboo and palm leaf picnic plates and bowls that can be reused several times then composted at the end of the season (available from biome.com.au and other eco-friendly retailers).
- Buy locally produced food and drink and remember to choose sensibly packaged produce.
- To help reduce contamination (and make clean-up easier) set up your recycling and garbage bins so they are clearly marked and easy to understand. You can download signage from FestiveRecycling.PlanetArk.org.
- Leftover party food makes for a nice lunch the next day and when you're ready to throw away remaining food scraps put them in the worm farm or compost bin.
- You can also put biodegradable plates and bowls into the compost. A comprehensive composting and worm-farming guide is available for download from FestiveRecycling.PlanetArk.org.

- Remember to recycle all of your party hats, empty champagne bottles, corks, beer bottles, aluminium cans, fruit mince pie trays and biscuit tins.
- To find out how to recycle other party ware visit RecyclingNearYou.com.au or call the Hotline on 1300 733 712.



Watch Your Waste!



Australians throw away nearly 3.3 million tonnes of food every year, mostly because of over-shopping and waste at the table.

- Write shopping lists, plan meals and practice portion control to minimise waste in the first place.
- After a festive feast, don't throw away the leftovers. Put them in plastic containers or bags and send them home with guests or freeze for use later.
- Compost or worm farm your food waste. Fruits and vegetables and their peels, pits and seeds are all perfect for composting – a great natural fertilizer the garden will love!
- Don't throw unwanted gifts or superseded items in the garbage. Host a swap party at work or with friends – there's bound to be someone who wants them. There's a complete guide to hosting a Swap Party at RecyclingWeek.PlanetArk.org
- Donate old clothing, furniture, toys and books to charity, and ensure that old white goods, TVs and other electronic waste are recycled properly.



Recycle Right



One of the simplest things that you can do to reduce your environmental impact at this time of year is to ensure that you put the right things into your home recycling bin. This will maximize the efficiency of the recycling process, and have the greatest environmental benefit in terms of water and energy savings, and reduced carbon dioxide emissions.

- Greeting cards and wrapping paper can be recycled in your kerbside collection.
- If a kerbside collection isn't available you can donate old greeting cards to local primary schools or nursing homes for use in craft activities.
- You can also put paper cards and wrapping (as distinct from foil or plastic) into your compost bin or worm farm.

- For more information about what to do with your greeting cards and wrapping paper, download a fact sheet from FestiveRecycling.PlanetArk.org.
- All the corks you pop over festive season can be recycled. There are collection programs for The Girl Guides, Melbourne Zoo and other not-for-profit groups. Put a bowl at the bar or in the kitchen to collect the corks then check out the RecyclingNearYou.com.au site or call the Hotline (1300 733 712) for local drop-off locations. They will be recycled into floor tiles, horse-float mats, boat decking and the inners for cricket and hockey balls.
- When you're out at a party do your bit by collecting discarded corks and bringing them home with you for recycling.
- When you're mowing the lawn or pruning the garden over summer, make sure all of your cuttings are collected through your council green waste collection or put into a compost bin.
- Keep food scraps and garden waste out of your recycling bin!
- Glass jars and bottles are the only types of glass that can be recycled through your home recycling. That means that all of your champagne, beer and wine bottles, along with your empty jars of chutney, cranberry sauce or dip, should all go into your home recycling bin.
- Only put bottles and jars in your kerbside glass collection. Any other type of glass, including windowpanes, Pyrex and drinking glasses, are made from heat-strengthened material, which melts at a higher temperature than bottles and jars. Even a small amount of this type of glass can contaminate tonnes of recyclable glass.
- Keep plastic bags out of your home recycling. They are the number one form of contamination in recycling. Recycling facility workers aren't able to open them to see whether the contents are recyclable and the bags get caught around the recycling facility machines.
- All types of plastic shopping bags can be recycled at all major supermarkets.
- Gizmos and gadgets are common gifts at this time of year, so if you're upgrading to a newer mobile phone, computer, TV or iPod, or you have used printer cartridges to get rid of, don't forget to recycle the old ones. You can search for local drop-off locations on RecyclingNearYou.com.au.
- White goods, TVs and other larger items can be disposed of through a council collection.
- For local recycling services and further information on recycling anything from corks to computers, bottles to batteries, or food waste to furniture, please visit RecyclingNearYou.com.au or call the National Recycling Hotline on 1300 733 712.



Happy Holidays!

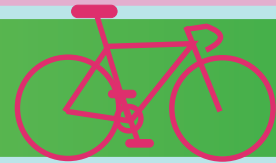


Forget work! Forget school! Forget your worries! But don't forget the environment! When you're visiting the beautiful places Australia and the world have to offer remember to look after the beaches, parks and the wildlife.

- Keep Australia beautiful by putting your rubbish in the bin.
- Make sure all of your aluminium cans, newspapers, and drink bottles end up in the recycling bin.
- If you can't find a recycling bin while you're out and about take your recyclables with you and put them in your home recycling.
- If you're unsure about what can and can't be recycled at your holiday destination then visit RecyclingNearYou.com.au or call the Hotline on 1300 733 712. You can also check with your holiday letting agent.
- Do the right thing with cigarette butts and put them in the bin – or carry a personal ashtray with you. They may be small but cigarette butts are the number one form of litter and they can start fires.
- Treat your holiday location as if it was your own community or home.



Travel



Australians love to travel be it by planes, trains or automobiles. But with transport being the second largest contributor to climate change it's an area where we could make some improvements. At this busy time of year it's important to travel safely – for the planet and ourselves.

- It's summer, get out in the fresh air and walk or ride a bike. It's healthier (and you might work off some of the Christmas dinner) and emits no greenhouse gases.
- Use public transport wherever possible, and keep car trips to a minimum.
- If you are hiring a car to go on holidays rent a fuel efficient model – like a hybrid. You'll reduce your emissions and you'll save money.
- If you must drive, then avoid petrol-guzzlers and roll all of your errands into one trip.
- A few simple changes to the way you drive can greatly improve your car's efficiency and reduce its greenhouse emissions. These include: reducing your cruising speed; keeping your car serviced and your tyres correctly inflated; braking and accelerating as smoothly as possible; travelling without unnecessary baggage to lighten your car; and, limiting your air conditioning and heating use whilst in the car.

- Air travel has a very heavy environmental impact but there are ways to reduce it. First, take fewer flights. Have a holiday in Australia rather than overseas. Travel by car, train, bus or boat between cities. Second, offset your flights. Most major airlines now offer this service for a small fee (the price depends upon how far you're traveling). You can also offset through other schemes. Look for an accredited provider, especially those that invest in renewable energy programs, for more information visit CarbonOffsetGuide.com.au
- You can also recycle your used tyres and motor oil. Visit the RecyclingNearYou.com.au site or call the Hotline on 1300 733 712 to find a recycling location near you.



Energy Use



Energy consumption and the greenhouse emissions that go with it is the biggest environmental issue facing the world at the moment. Over the festive season we use more energy than other times of the year for the Christmas lights, roasting the turkey, powering the air-conditioning, constantly opening and closing the fridge, or watching hours of cricket and tennis. But there are ways you can reduce your energy use and still enjoy all of these things.

- Use energy efficient appliances and light-globes.
- Make sure that you switch appliances off at the wall when not in use.
- Turn lights off when you leave the room.
- Don't leave the Christmas lights on all night.
- Go easy on the air-conditioning. Better yet, use natural ventilation by opening windows and doors to let in the breeze.
- Use microwave ovens, slow-cookers or pressure-cookers as these are all energy efficient methods of cooking.
- Encourage the kids to decide what they want before opening the fridge door.
- Wash your Santa suit in cold water and dry it on the line.
- Don't waste money on wasted energy when you go away on holidays. Turn all your appliances off at the wall. There's no use having the microwave clock on while there's no one in the house. Turning the fridge down a few degrees and turning the water heater down, or off, will also save energy and money. Some water heaters have a 'vacation' function.
- Give the environment a very Happy New Year and switch to a green power source, for more information visit GreenPower.gov.au.



Water



We all know that water is precious and it's important to remember this when we're on holidays.

- Check with the local council for information on water restrictions at your holiday destination.
- Keep your showers short.
- Only flush the toilet if you need to.
- Turn off or fix dripping taps.
- Don't rinse dishes before putting them in the dish-washer and only put it on when it's full.
- Wash your car with a bucket and sponge.
- Use grey water on your garden. Download a grey water information kit from FestiveRecycling.PlanetArk.org.
- Treat your holiday water supply the same way that you would if you were at home.



Green Resolutions



Our responsibility to care for the planet extends throughout the calendar so make this a year for the planet by committing to a green resolution – or two.

There are lots of things you can resolve to do to help reduce your impact on the planet. Some of them involve doing some research and planning, while others you can start right now.

Sample Resolutions

1. I resolve to buy eco-friendly gifts for, or give something non-material to, my friends and family to reduce consumption and support sustainable production.
 - Search online for great eco-gift ideas. Alternatively, consider giving your time, a charity gift card, an experience like a massage voucher, or event tickets.
2. I resolve to get outside, away from the traffic, and enjoy nature.
 - Getting out into nature is the best way to get to know it, and when we know it we care for it. Experiencing nature is important for everyone but it's especially important for children. Go to your local park and watch the birds and insects. Have a picnic. Take a day trip to a national park for a bush walk (visit BushWalkingAustralia.org for information on local hiking trails and national parks) or go camping.

3. I resolve to use my home recycling correctly and find drop-off locations for items that can't be recycled at home.

- Contamination is a big problem when sorting and processing recycling. For example, just 5 grams of window or drink ware glass is enough to contaminate a whole tonne of recyclable glass.
- To find out what can and can't go in your home recycling bin, and to find drop off locations for a whole range of items, including computers, energy-saving light globes, batteries and used clothing, visit RecyclingNearYou.com.au or call the Recycling Hotline on 1300 733 712.

4. I resolve to remember to take reusable bags with me to the supermarket and shopping centre, and to use them.

- If all Australians switched to using reusable shopping bags it would save nearly 4 billion plastic bags every year or 10 million new bags every day.

Get inspired, uncover new green trends and eco-living tips, and get access to special promotions and competitions, with Planet Ark's *Aware* Newsletter, delivered each month to your nominated email account. Sign up at PlanetArk.org/Aware

For more information on anything included in this guide,
and for additional resources visit
FestiveRecycling.PlanetArk.org

Visit the **RecyclingNearYou.com.au** website or call the
Hotline (**1300 733 712**) for information on local kerbside
collections and drop-off locations for a range of products.

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