

## Sustainable Lifestyles



One of the key things we can do is to think about how we live, the choices we make and the many ways we can reduce our environmental footprint. You can calculate your own Ecological Footprint at [www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators). Meanwhile here are a few considerations and ideas to help you on your way.

### **Transport**

Transportation is expensive in both dollar and environmental terms. In addition to greenhouse gasses, vehicle exhausts cause air pollution in both smog and particle matter which contributes to health problems in many people. Transport makes up about 15% of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions.

Alternatives to driving include walking, bike riding and using public transport. More convenient car share options are also now available such as Flexi Car, see [www.flexicar.com.au](http://www.flexicar.com.au), and Oz Car Pool at [www.ozcarpool.com.au](http://www.ozcarpool.com.au) for more information. There is also a Green Vehicle Guide at [www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au](http://www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au) or see Greenfleet at [www.greenfleet.com.au](http://www.greenfleet.com.au). Bicycle Victoria is also a great source of information and can be found at [www.bv.com.au](http://www.bv.com.au)

Choices such as living close to your work, local shops, transport and schools can significantly reduce the amount of car travel required. Does anyone you work with live nearby that you could car share with? Can you plan your car travel to do all your jobs in one trip? Can you drive your car more efficiently? Every little thing you can do to reduce car usage helps to reduce your carbon footprint.

### **Food**

Did you know that the average Australian eats over 70 kg of meat per capita each year? Reducing this by half would save 1.5 million litres of water and 1.45 tonnes of greenhouse gas per year. It's not hard to do! When buying food look for local produce and only buy what you really need. You'll save money and support local business. If you can, buy organic products that are grown and processed without the use of synthetic chemicals or genetic modification. While these are generally more expensive, the benefits in terms of energy value from the food and taste are much better. Better still, set up your own vegetable garden!

'Food miles' is a term that measures the distance food travels between the point of production and the point of consumption. Calculating food miles can get very complex. Generally the further the food has to travel, the more 'food miles' are involved, the more energy it uses and the less fresh the product becomes. Buying local has many benefits, and low 'food miles' is one of them.

### **The Story of Stuff**

Have you seen The Story of Stuff? When you can, take a look at one of the many stories on <http://storyofstuff.org>. These videos are used in schools to help kids and adults become aware of how 'stuff' is impacting our environment. The general 'Story of Stuff' and the 'Bottled Water' video are definitely worth watching. They are in an easy to watch and understand format, are very interesting and very eye opening.

## **Shopping**

We all like a bit of 'Retail therapy' occasionally, but how many times have you bought something simply for the pleasure of buying rather than the benefit of actually using the product? A WWF Living Planet Report, 2006 states that humanity's ecological footprint as of 2003, exceeds the Earth's capacity to provide resources by about 25%. That percentage is believed to be even higher now. Basically we are consuming more than the planet can provide, in other words, we are living on credit and the bill is coming in now.

There are 2 things to consider in relation to sustainable shopping. First is do you really need the purchase? This leads towards the Reduce component of waste management. If we only buy what we really need we'll save money and reduce our environmental impact, and every little bit helps. See our tip sheet on Waste Management at [www.greenmoves.com.au/freeinfo](http://www.greenmoves.com.au/freeinfo) for more information on this topic. We are surrounded by companies trying to sell us products we don't really need, be aware that this is happening and only purchase what you need.

The other is to purchase products that have less impact on the environment. Look for products with the Good Environmental Choice (GECA) label, companies that have an environmental sustainability policy and operate in an environmentally responsible manner and items that are recyclable, re-useable or from a renewable resource. You can see which products have a GECA award by going to [www.geca.org.au](http://www.geca.org.au)



## **Household Cleaning**

Cleaning products, garden sprays and personal products often contain harmful ingredients such as solvents, acids and corrosive chemicals. Apart from the direct health hazards these products can give, they can also harm the environment either when being used or when disposed of.

There are many non-toxic and environmentally friendly products available. Not to mention 'the old ways' of cleaning using things like eucalyptus oil, vinegar, bi-carbonate of soda and lemon juice. Companies like Enjo provide good non-toxic cleaning products. Just thinking about what we do, like using bagless vacuum cleaners which save on the cost of bags and helps to minimise waste, all contributes towards minimising our impact.



Don't forget, try the environmental footprint calculator at [www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators)

For any queries or additional information on this tip sheet please contact Green Moves Australia on (03) 9024 5515 or 1300 898 742

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