

Green Tips for Bulletins/ Newsletters

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Some of these Green Tips refer to Sydney options so you may need to find alternatives that people can use in your local area.

Key environmental dates:

- ✓ Australian Government Environmental Calendar
<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/7f82b354-88da-4c1e-a6f7-9bc09d7b91d2/files/2018-calendar-environmental-events.pdf>
- ✓ May 18, 2018 - [National Walk Safely to School Day](#)
- ✓ June 18, 2018 - anniversary of *Laudato si'*
- ✓ July - [Plastic Free July](#)
- ✓ Sept 01, 2018 - World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation
- ✓ Sept 01, 2018 - Creation Day ([The Season of Creation – 2018: The Word in Creation](#))
- ✓ Sept 02, 2018: - 1st Sunday in Creation – [Planet Earth Sunday](#)
- ✓ Sept 09, 2018: 2nd Sunday in Creation – [Humanity Sunday](#)
- ✓ Sept 16, 2018: 3rd Sunday in Creation – [Sky Sunday](#)
- ✓ Sept 23, 2018 - 4th Sunday in Creation – [Mountain Sunday](#)
- ✓ Sept 30, 2018 - 5th Sunday in Creation – [Blessing of the Animals](#)
- ✓ Oct 04, 2018 - St Francis of Assisi Day

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Biodiversity

1. Many small actions by lots of people add up to make a big difference to our environment. Have you thought about making a New Year's resolution for the environment? Or consider choosing one change and then make that change until it becomes a habit and then choose another. This year our bulletin will contain each week a sustainability tip or idea for discussion with your family. Here are some ideas to get started:
 - Plant a tree
 - Walk, cycle, carpool or take public transport once this week where you would usually drive a car
 - Switch off the light as you leave a room at night
 - Give the clothes dryer a rest this weekend and use the clothes line or a clothes rack instead
2. Biodiversity is the variety of all life forms. But it is more than the life in the bush, rivers and oceans. It has many important roles including providing us with medicine and food, producing oxygen, cleaning water and breaking down our garbage. There are many things we can do to preserve biodiversity for our future. For example, to preserve forest biodiversity:
 - Try to use plantation timber instead of native forest or woodland timber when building or renovating.
 - Leave dead trees and logs in the bush, as they are habitat for birds and animals. Instead obtain your firewood from a timber yard and ask for plantation timber.
 - When driving at dusk or dawn, try to drive carefully and watch out for native animals, especially in areas near bushland.
 - Avoid dumping garden waste such as prunings and grass clippings in the bush, as this can introduce and spread weeds. Instead place it in council vegetation bins.
3. As urbanization increases, gardens are increasingly being regarded as wildlife havens, particularly if they are adjacent or close to natural areas. To preserve biodiversity in our gardens, consider creating habitat for native animals by planting some local native species in your garden and leaving logs and rocks for shelter. Also consider avoiding the use of pesticides and herbicides, as they contaminate waterways and soils. They also potentially expose us, our pets and wildlife to negative health effects from toxic chemicals. Where you must use them, consider using those made from natural ingredients, such as pyrethrum.
4. When gardening, consider switching away from chemical fertilisers to organic fertilizers, such as manure, compost, grass clippings, seaweed or fish emulsion. This will help both your garden and the environment. Advantages of organic over chemical fertilisers are that they break down more slowly and generally match the rate at which plants need the nutrients. Organic fertilisers also improve the soil structure by increasing soil's ability to retain nutrients and water. Less frequent applications are needed as chemical fertilisers tend to wash away during watering or rainfall. Organic fertilisers are also better for the environment as during rainfall events chemical fertilisers run off gardens into the stormwater and into waterways, causing algal blooms, which may kill aquatic animals.

5. Australians love our pets. It is estimated that around 70% of households have one or more pets. Our wildlife is also widely valued and enjoyed as visitors to our gardens. However, many pets hunt wildlife, for example the average domestic cat attacks and brings home 16 mammals, 8 birds and 8 reptiles each year. With high numbers of domestic pets in urban areas, where native animals are fewer than in the wild, even though each individual animal may only kill or injure a small number of native animals, it has a bigger effect on the already reduced population. However, with good pet management, the needs of both pets and wildlife can be met. Try to keep cats indoors, especially at night and have pets de-sexed. Put two bells on your cat's collar (as cats are clever and can work out how to hunt silently with one bell), or even investigate the "[cat bib](#)" or similar products, to warn native animals of their presence.
6. Have you considered planting some native plants in your garden or on your balcony? Local native varieties need less maintenance and watering and attract wildlife. Collections of wildlife friendly gardens across cities and towns can act as habitat corridors by acting as stepping-stones, enabling wildlife to move through the landscape. If you are interested in attracting the widest range and largest numbers of wildlife to your garden, a range of plants of different heights is required, including low (less than 2m), medium (2 – 8m) and tall (over 8m), to mimic what would be found naturally. Your local native plant nursery can provide advice about which plant species are native to your area. Including birdbaths, ponds or water features in the garden will provide water. Whilst piles of rocks, logs and leaf litter will create shelter for lizards, insects and frogs. If you are really keen, nest boxes in trees will create shelter for birds, gliders, and possums, with the added benefit of keeping them out of your roof.
7. Do you like to fish on the coast? To preserve our fisheries for the future, when fishing, know what species you can take and which you should throw back. Only take what you need and leave undersized fish for another day. Know what the regulations [allow](#) and what is [prohibited](#). When you have finished, wrap up unwanted or tangled fishing lines, nets and bait packages and dispose of them on land. This protects fish, marine mammals, birds and reptiles from entanglement.
8. Did you know there is a 24 hour [Marine Mammal Hotline](#) you can call to report stranded or injured marine mammals, such as whales, seals and dolphins? The number is 02 9415 3333. It is run by volunteer organisation ORRCA (Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans in Australia), which undertakes marine mammal rescue, rehabilitation and release.
9. This Sunday 29th July 2018 is [National Tree Day](#), Australia's largest community tree planting and nature care event. For the past 20 years people have joined together to plant a tree on this day to reconnect with nature and do something positive for the environment. It's a great way to spend time outdoors with the family and to feel part of your local community. You can simply turn up and spend as much time planting as you wish. In the future as you pass by, watching the trees your family planted grow in your local area is very rewarding. As wildlife comes back you can enjoy nature in a habitat you helped create. The full list of events is available at: <http://treeday.planetark.org/find-a-site/>

10. How about spending some time outdoors and helping scientists help our native birds at the same time? Next week is the '[Aussie Backyard Bird Count](#)', a nationwide bird survey where members of the public count how many birds they see in their garden or a park in a 20-minute period, from the 22nd to the 28th of October 2018. You can complete as many counts as you like during the week and the data is pooled across Australia and compared to previous year's results. The findings help [BirdLife Australia](#) manage conservation efforts for birds and give researchers an indication of how our native birds are faring.

To participate, download the free '[Aussie Bird Count](#)' app for Android or Apple, or register [online](#). There is a field guide to help you recognise the various bird species. The app also shows you how many people nearby are taking part and the species counted in your neighbourhood and Australia. It's a great way to spend time outdoors and to get to know some of the birds visiting your garden.

11. If you find an injured or orphaned native animal, call a wildlife rescue organization straight away, such as

- WIRES: 1300 094 737 <http://www.wires.org.au/>
- Wildlife Victoria: 03 8400 7300 <https://www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/>

In the meantime, place a towel or blanket over the animal and gently place it in a box (cover the top) if it is safe to do so. Do not give the animal food or water.

Chemicals

1. Did you know that there is a natural and effective alternative to using toxic naphthalene for storing winter clothing? Cedar blocks or bags of cedar chips can deter moths without using toxic chemicals and are available for purchase online or from [Howards Storage World](#).
2. Did you know the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) holds [Household Chemical CleanOut events](#) each year at a range of locations across Sydney for the free disposal of unwanted household chemicals? At these clean up events you simply drive up in the car on the specified date and time with your items for disposal in your car boot. Someone there takes the items out of your car and sorts them for correct disposal. Items accepted include gas canisters, fire extinguishers, herbicides, pesticides and other hazardous chemicals, as well as paint. Any paint cans that are empty can however be disposed of in your normal household garbage.
3. There's usually an organic alternative for any commercial chemical cleaning product. Avoiding toxic chemicals is better for the environment and most likely our health. Making your own 'green' household cleaners uses many ingredients you may already have in your cupboard, such as baking soda, lemon juice, white vinegar, salt, borax and essential oils. Green household cleaners can be used to replace dishwashing detergents, oven cleaners, bleach, laundry detergents, carpet cleaners and window cleaners. For green cleaner recipes download the 'Green Cleaning Guide' found at: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/households/green-cleaning.htm> Why not print out the recipe page and stick it on the fridge?

Electricity

1. Earth Hour this year falls on Saturday 24 March 2018 between 8:30 and 9:30pm. Most people are familiar with the [Earth Hour](#) concept of turning off non-essential lights for one hour in order to highlight the idea that global problems like climate change can only be solved through collective action. You can join in by switching off the lights for one hour this Saturday for Earth Hour from 8.30pm to 9.30pm.
2. The running costs of some electrical appliances can far exceed the purchase price, so when buying a new appliance consider energy efficiency as well as the up-front cost. Compare the running costs of the product you are considering buying to the most efficient available on the market by looking at <http://www.energyrating.gov.au/>. The NSW government [Smarter Choice](#) program also gives guidance on buying new televisions, fridges, dishwashers, washing machines, dryers and air-conditioners.
3. Did you know the top four power uses in a typical Australian home are:
 - Heating and cooling 40%
 - Hot water 21%
 - TV and home entertainment 8%
 - Refrigeration 6%
4. As fridges typically consume around 6% of a home's annual power, it's worth checking your fridge is working efficiently. Between 2 and 5 degrees Celsius are safe temperatures for storing food. If you set your fridge temperature any lower, you are making your fridge work harder than necessary and will be paying for wasted energy. Also switch off your second fridge when not in use, or better still, recycle it. See: <http://www.fridgerecyclingservices.melbourne/>
5. Electrical appliances such as computers, sound systems, televisions and mobile phone chargers all consume power when plugged in on standby. Consider making it easy to turn electronics off when not in use by plugging them into a power strip and flipping off the power point switch.
6. Do any of your appliances need replacing? Did you know that there is a government website to compare the energy rating of products? Have a look at www.energyrating.gov.au or download the [Energy Rating app](#) for iPhone®, iPad®, iPod touch®, Android™ and Windows Phones found at <http://www.energyrating.gov.au/apps>. Once you've selected an appliance, to calculate its running cost - multiply its wattage (stamped on the back or bottom) by hours and days used in the year, divide this by 1000 for kWh and multiply by the current tariff.
7. Looking for some school holiday ideas for primary aged children? Research shows unstructured play outdoors and in nature promotes a healthy lifestyle, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills, as well as building resilience and creativity. Best of all it gets kids outside and away from screens. How many of your happy times remembered from childhood are memories of time spent outdoors? Take the Queensland Nature Play challenge and see how many of the ["51 Things to Do Before You're 12"](https://www.natureplayqld.org.au/resources/51-things-to-do-before-you-re-12) your kids have done. <https://www.natureplayqld.org.au/resources/51-things-to-do-before-you-re-12>

8. Did you know you can reduce your computer's energy use by about 85% each day by two simple actions?
 - Turn off your computer before bed each night and before you go out for the day
 - Reduce the timer setting for the computer's sleep mode for when the computer is idle, to just a short time

Food and Food Waste

1. Ever had a vision of yourself growing your own vegetables and strolling outside to pick the vegies for your salad, but didn't know where to start? It's not as hard as it may seem and there is nothing quite as satisfying as growing your own food. Growing a vegie patch also decreases CO₂ and reduces food waste. Some basics to consider:
 - You need a spot in your garden that gets direct sunlight, morning sun is ideal
 - Avoid locations under trees or with lots of tree roots that will steal nutrients and water
 - Create three or four raised beds if you have space, to rotate crops and minimise soil diseases,
 - Following organic gardening principles avoids chemical use to make your garden safer for you, your plants and local wildlife.For more information, many local councils run courses on growing vegetables, also information can be found in gardening magazines, nurseries and websites such as <https://www.choice.com.au/outdoor/gardening/products-and-advice/articles/starting-a-vegetable-garden>
2. We're all aware of food waste, but did you know Australians discard up to 20% of all the food that they purchase? To try to reduce this, consider planning well, eating leftovers, and shopping with a list so that everything you buy will be used. The *Love Food Hate Waste* website <http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au/> has great tips for how your household can avoid food waste. Visit:
 - [Food Waste Tool Kit](#) for videos, recipes, shopping list and food knowledge
 - [Keep it fresh](#) safe storage rules for different foods
 - [Recipes](#) for breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert, snacks and drinks
 - [Love your leftovers](#) avoid food poisoning, minimise waste and maximise taste
3. Do you have a worm farm or compost bin for food scraps? A large 50% of our waste is food, which produces the major greenhouse gas methane when it breaks down in landfill. Worms and composting can turn unwanted food scraps into nutrients for our gardens. Have a special bin for food scraps and use them in your [compost](#) or [worm farm](#). Ask for help at your local nursery or hardware store, or online at websites such as:
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/households/worm-farms.htm>
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/households/composting.htm>
4. School lunches – zero waste and local
5. Connect with our farmers – know where your food is from

6. Next time you are shopping have a look at the country of origin of the food in the supermarket. Buying locally produced, in-season produce adds freshness, supports Australian farmers and reduces carbon dioxide emissions at every stage of food life cycles.
7. The fish we choose directly affects the health of our oceans. In response to growing public concern about overfishing, a new guide has been produced to assist us to make informed seafood choices. [Australia's Sustainable Seafood Online Guide](http://www.sustainableseafood.org.au) can be found at <http://www.sustainableseafood.org.au> and gives an insight into the sustainability of around 90 seafood species commonly found at our fishmongers, supermarkets, fish and chip shops and restaurants. To ensure you have the information on each species every time you need to make a seafood choice, a free pocket guide can be printed out from the website, or a free Android or iPhone app downloaded. Why not get your copy today?

Heating and Air Conditioning

1. As heating and cooling consume around 40% of an average home's annual energy, when it is time to replace your heating or cooling system, consider choosing an efficient system. Reverse cycle air conditioners (heat pumps) [cost less to run](#) than conventional electric heaters, or oil or gas options. Adding ceiling insulation can also reduce heating costs in winter by up to 25% and will also make your home cooler in summer.
2. Tired of expensive electricity bills over summer? Consider the following tips to reduce energy use on cooling the house during summer:
 - Use fans and natural air flow through the house for cooling instead of air conditioning
 - Open windows at night and then close the windows the next day by 7.30am to keep the house as naturally cool as possible
 - Insulate your roof to reduce heat gain during summer
 - Use curtains or blinds with reflective backings to stop summer heat
 - When air conditioning is essential, have it set to a maximum of 24°C and use fans to push the cool air around
3. Does your electricity bill soar over winter? Here are some tips to reduce power used for heating at this time of year:
 - Only heat the rooms you are using and close doors to unused rooms.
 - Before you switch on the heater, put a jumper on or grab a blanket.
 - Use door snakes/ weather strips to prevent cold air entering and heat being lost
 - Use an energy efficient heater when necessary.
 - Avoid overheating as every 1°C can add 10% to your energy bill. When air conditioning heating is essential, have it set to a maximum of 20°C.

Home Energy Rating

1. Saving power has an immediate impact on your gas and electricity bills and the environment. If you'd like to know how sustainable your home is relative to others, use the [NABERS Home Energy Explorer](#). Entering the data takes 5 to 10 minutes to complete and you will need your past 12 months energy bills. Your information is converted into a star rating scale from one to five stars. 2.5 stars reflects average performance and 5 stars represents an outstanding home. The NABERS Home Rating can also be used to calculate your home's water usage relative to an average household of the same size and with the same local climate.

Hot Water

1. Given hot water guzzles a fifth of a home's annual power (more if you have teenagers), when you need a new system, consider switching from electric hot water to solar or a heat pump. It can save around \$145 in running costs per year. Also, regularly check your hot water system set is no higher than 60°C to save energy and prevent burns and scalds.
2. Over 20% of your electricity bill is from energy used to heat water. Reducing hot water use and installing a more efficient hot water system are great ways to reduce energy use. How about implementing a "one-song shower" concept into your family? An easy way to have a four-minute shower is to only shower for the duration of a song from the radio or device. Installing water efficient showerheads will save even more hot water.
3. How well do you know your water meter? If the numbers on your meter are turning while there's no water being used in your home, you could have a leak. Just one dripping tap can waste up to 2,000 litres a month. If you're not sure where your water meter is, call Sydney Water on 13 20 92.
4. Have you tried washing your laundry in cold water in your washing machine? Cold water when used with a washing powder or liquid suitable for cold water performs just as well as hot water while using half the energy.

Lent

1. What kinds of good environmental and spiritual habits will you develop in the next 40 days? Have you thought about giving up carbon consumption for Lent? A [Carbon Fast](#) can help you become more mindful of – and reduce - your impact on Creation. Why not try the Carbon Fast this Lent?

Oceans

1. Keep our beaches clean and safe and leave only footprints after visiting. Pick up a few pieces of others rubbish each time you visit the beach to do your bit to protect the wildlife of the oceans.
2. Clean beaches... clear water... lots of marine life... We love our coast and expect these things. If we are careful how we use our coast, we can preserve them for the future. There are many ways to enjoy what our coasts have to offer, whilst minimising our impact on coastal environments. For example, if we and our dogs stay off the sand dunes and stick to walking tracks and designated parking areas, we can protect the plants which hold the sand dunes in place and the sea birds that nest there.
3. Ocean acidification that accompanies climate change inhibits shell growth in marine animals, such as crabs, lobsters, clams and oysters. Warmer oceans are also causing coral bleaching, with the head of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority estimating in May that up to 50% of Great Barrier Reef coral has died in the past two years. We all need to stop Climate Change.

Paper

1. Have you considered reusing paper and printing on both sides? It will save both money and forests.
2. Have a look at the toilet paper in your bathroom, the tissue paper in your kitchen and paper in your printer. Does it contain recycled content? It takes 70 to 90% less energy to make recycled paper and it prevents the loss of forests worldwide.

Recycling

1. Did you know that plastic bottle tops and lids often cannot be recycled with the bottle as they may be made of a different type of plastic? The four steps for correct kerbside recycling of plastic and glass bottles are: remove any lids, rinse the bottles with cold water, squash plastic bottles, then place in the recycling bin.
2. Do you know what you can't put out in your kerbside recycling? Plastic bags, bin liners and cling wrap are not recyclable and get stuck in the sorting equipment at recycling facilities, causing it to stop or break. So, don't put bottles and cans for recycling together in plastic bags when putting them in your recycling bin. Instead keep them loose. You can recycle soft plastic bags by taking them to your supermarket and placing them in the bins provided at the front of Woolworths and Coles stores. Polystyrene foam is also generally not recyclable, including the black foam trays used for supermarket meats and polystyrene takeaway containers and hot drink cups. So, consider avoiding buying products packaged in this way and don't put polystyrene in your kerbside-recycling bin.

3. Coffee pods are increasingly popular as a convenient way to enjoy a cup of coffee at the push of a button. However, the small single-serve capsules are increasingly becoming an environmental issue with millions being sent to landfill every year. Did you know that Terracycle provides free recycling of certain brands of coffee pods? Nespresso pods can be returned to locations around Australia which you can find by entering your postcode into the [Terracycle website](#). Alternatively, they can be returned to your nearest Nespresso store for recycling. Terracycle also recycles the Nescafe Dolce Gusto brand of coffee, tea and milk capsules. Enter your postcode into the [Terracycle website](#) to find your nearest drop-off point, or use the website to order a pre-paid shipping label which allows you to post them from your nearest post office. Don't contaminate your collection by mixing with other brands of capsules.
4. We love our takeaway coffees, to the extent that an estimated 550 million disposable non-recyclable coffee cups and lids end up in landfill in Australia each year. Every plastic coffee lid ever used that has not been recycled is still in existence, either in landfill or in the natural environment. Consider bringing your own cup or mug when getting your morning takeaway coffee. Where this is not possible, you can recycle disposable coffee lids with the plastic code 1 to 6.
5. Australians love coffee so much that we consume over 3 billion takeaway cups and lids every year, with most not being recycled. As discussed on the [ABC's War On Waste](#) program, cafes can reduce or eliminate disposable coffee cups by offering a discount to customers bringing their own reusable cups. The [Responsible Cafes website](#) maps the coffee shops that offer this discount. Check the map for your nearest option. If your favourite coffee shop offers a discount for bringing your own cup, suggest they register on the website. If not, suggest they do.
6. Where possible use refillable or recyclable ink cartridges and toners for photocopiers and printers. As part of the '[Cartridges 4 Planet Ark recycling program](#)', used printer cartridges can be dropped into a 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark' collection box at participating Australia Post, Officeworks, JB Hi-Fi, Dick Smith Electronics, The Good Guys, Harvey Norman, Office National and Office Products Depot outlets. To find your nearest participating drop off location visit [RecyclingNearYou.com](#) or call the Cartridges Hotline on 1800 24 24 73.
7. Visit [PlanetArk](#) online or call the National Recycling Hotline on 1300 733 712 for further information about any National Recycling Week initiatives.
8. Almost 99% of the components that make up a computer, 90% of the components of a mobile phone and 96% of lead acid batteries can be recycled. Unwanted electronic devices that still operate can be given away through the [Freecycle Network](#). Alternatively, broken or obsolete electronic items can be recycled for free such as:
 - [mobile phones, their batteries and accessories](#)
 - [lead acid batteries](#)
 - [televisions, computers and computer accessories](#)

Student Initiated Projects

1. The House environment leaders have met to start working on the House Sustainability Challenge. This is a chance for each House to think of a triple bottom line project (considering ecological, social and economic factors) for their House to take on. Last year some wonderful projects were presented to Lane Cove Council sustainability officer Katie Helm on World Environment Day June 5, including a wonderful waste to art project and some House gardens. What is your House contemplating this year?

Transport Fuels

1. Friday 22 May is [National Walk Safely to School Day](#)? It is an annual, national event to encourage all Primary School children to walk and commute safely to school. Riding a bike or walking instead of using the car saves on petrol, reduces pollution, reduces traffic congestion and increases fitness and best of all gets us outside. Plan your next cycle trip with the NSW cycle way finder: http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/maps/cycleway_finder or how about exploring Sydney by bike this weekend? Here is a [guide](#) to some popular rides in different parts of Sydney that are suitable for all ages. <http://www.sydneycycleways.net/resources/sydney-rides/>
2. try car-pooling, bike, walk to school

Waste

1. Plastic pollution is threatening our ocean's biodiversity and entering the food chain. Only a fraction of the plastic we produce is recycled, with 10% reaching the oceans, which equates to 26 million tonnes of plastic every year. A 2017 World Economic Forum study estimated that by 2050, plastic will outweigh fish in the world's oceans.
2. Next month is Plastic Free July. It is a campaign to raise awareness of the problems with single-use disposable plastic and challenges people to choose to refuse single-use plastic during July. You sign up at [Plastic Free July](#) for a day, a week or the month, to choose to refuse either all single-use plastic, or try the top 4 takeaway items: bags, water bottles, coffee cups and straws.

We use these items for five minutes, but they last forever when we throw them away. Almost every piece of plastic ever made still exists on earth and our consumption is increasing, with more plastic produced in the first 10 years of this century than in the entire last century. But exactly where does it go when we throw it 'away'? 'Away' means it ends up as either:

- Landfill
- Marine pollution in the ocean
- Recycled plastic

To accept the challenge, go to <http://www.plasticfreejuly.org/>

3. Many [exfoliating body washes and facial scrubs](#) sold in Australia contain tiny plastic microbeads that wash down our bathroom drains and are becoming an increasing source of plastic contamination in our oceans. Who knew? When sea creatures absorb or eat these microbeads, they are passed along the marine food chain. It is likely that we are also absorbing microbeads from the seafood we eat. Microbeads are not biodegradable and once they enter the marine environment, they cannot be removed. Some manufacturers have committed to replacing microbeads with biodegradable alternatives over time and some do not contain microbeads at all. Have a look at the '[Beat the microbead](#)' app that checks if a product contains microbeads, by scanning the barcode with your smartphone camera.
4. Use 2nd hand where possible – uniform, books
5. Wise purchasing – do you need all in the stationary pack
6. Think fair trade –when making purchases
7. Meetings – encourage people to say no to disposables, bring your own cup “rock up with a cup
8. Packaging makes up around 1/3 of household waste and its manufacturing uses up energy. Consider avoiding heavily packaged products, such as supermarket vegetables in plastic trays then wrapped in plastic and buy loose product instead.
9. Most of the 15 billion batteries manufactured each year are alkaline batteries, which are discarded after their life cycle. Batteries that are thrown away and taken to landfills break down and leak chemicals into the groundwater. With so many electronic devices surrounding us, it makes environmental and financial sense to switch to rechargeable Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH) or Lithium Ion (Li-Ion) batteries. Try to choose reusable batteries and recycle all batteries when they die.
10. Most of us use plastic bags for our shopping, but bringing reusable bags is only hard to remember at the start, it soon becomes a habit. Avoiding use of plastic bags would make a huge difference to pollution, particularly of our oceans. Small reusable bags that fit in a handbag are available from major supermarkets and online. For those times when you must use plastic bags, they can be recycled (both light and heavy plastic bags) by placing them in the plastic recycling collection bins at the front of Coles, Woolworths, Franklins or Safeway stores. To find plastic bag recycling locations in your area, visit RecyclingNearYou.com.au and search for 'Plastic shopping bags'. Torn or damaged reusable 'green bags' that can no longer be reused can also be placed in these collection bins. Plastic bags and biodegradable bags should not be placed in your kerbside recycling bin at home as they can interfere with the sorting process and machinery at recycling facilities.
11. Tired of throwing out unread junk mail? Consider the following tips to reduce the junk mail in your letterbox and so minimise paper waste:
 - Place a *No Advertising Material* sticker on your letterbox. These stickers can be obtained free of charge from the Distribution Standards Board phone: 1800 676 136.
 - Report junk mail which has been dumped as litter, delivered in duplicate, or delivered to a letterbox with a *No Advertising Material* sticker on it; by calling the Distribution Standards Board on 1800 676 136.

- Register your details on the consumer [Do Not Contact Opt Out Service](#), which will reduce the addressed and unsolicited mail you receive from the 500 organisations that are members of ADMA (Association for Data-driven Marketing & Advertising).
- Register with [Catalogue Central](#) or [Lasoo Online Catalogues](#) to receive only advertising material that you want. Alternatively, you can visit retailer's own websites to subscribe to receive specific catalogues online.

Water

1. Do you know how much water a water efficient household should be using? Have a look at your most recent water bill together with Sydney Water's [water efficiency targets](#) to help you find out how water efficient your home is. There are many simple things you can do reduce your home's water consumption, which will reduce water bills and reduce your household's impact on the environment. For example, sweep paths and driveways with a broom, instead of using a hose. When watering the garden, water the base of plants not the leaves, and use a trigger nozzle so you only water those areas that need it.
2. Have you considered installing a rainwater tank? Rainwater tanks reduce your water bills and provide an alternative water supply during water restrictions. They also conserve drinking water resources and reduce the impact of stormwater runoff in our waterways. Even a small rainwater tank can be used water your garden or to wash the car. To choose the right rainwater tank for your home, you will need to consider local rainfall characteristics, your roof size, and how many uses the rainwater is to supply. The fact sheet [Choosing the Right Rainwater Tank](#) will assist you in choosing the right sized tank. Sydney Water's [Rainwater Tank Calculator](#) also provides more tailored information based on the historical rainfall pattern for your postcode area.
3. A leaking tap can waste as much as 2,000 litres of water a month, so stopping leaks as soon as they appear is important to saving water. If you suspect you have a hidden leak, record the numbers on your water meter before you go to bed, tell the family not to use water overnight, then recheck the meter reading in the morning. If the numbers have changed you may have a hidden leak.
4. Did you know Australians are the highest per capita consumers of water in the world? Inside our homes, the top three water uses are:
 - Showers 34%
 - Toilet 26%
 - Laundry 23%You can greatly reduce your water use by choosing water efficient products, as the most efficient appliances can use half as much water as an average product. So, when buying new shower heads, toilets, washing machines, taps and dishwashers, look for the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) rating and choose the highest rated products. To see how your appliances stack up, check the [WELS product database](#).
5. If you water your garden in the early morning or evening water loss through evaporation will be reduced.

6. It's easy to forget to re-mulch your garden. Regular mulching reduces moisture loss and weeds. For more information have a look at:
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/households/mulching.htm>
7. Place plants with similar watering needs together to save water. This Sydney Water [plant selector](http://www.sydneypwater.com.au/SW/your-home/saving-water-at-home/garden-and-pool/plant-selector/index.htm) is useful to help you choose the right plants for your garden.<http://www.sydneypwater.com.au/SW/your-home/saving-water-at-home/garden-and-pool/plant-selector/index.htm>
8. There are many simple ways to save water in your home. For example, run your washing machine and dishwasher only when they have a full load and use the economy cycle. Another way to avoid wasting water is to turn the tap off while brushing and shaving. Consider this: leaving the tap running can waste 10 litres of water every time you brush your teeth, which when brushing twice a day equates to 7,300 litres of water wasted per year, for each person in your home.
9. Did you know that Sydney stormwater flows untreated directly from streets and gutters into rivers, the harbour and the ocean, except that in some council areas it is filtered through traps to remove large rubbish pieces? Along the way to receiving waters, stormwater also picks up pollutants including nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen from garden fertilisers; lead, diesel and petroleum from roads; and a range of other chemicals. This stormwater pollution degrades our waterways. We can make a big difference to improving the quality of stormwater by:
 - Making sure all rubbish goes into bins for correct disposal or recycling, instead of letting it wash down gutters into a drain
 - Returning engine oils to a garage for recycling, not pouring it down a drain
 - Avoiding use of chemical fertilisers when gardening
 - Not pouring unwanted petrol, paint, thinners, or garden pesticides down drains
10. Wastewater from our homes and businesses can enter waterways untreated during periods of high rainfall. Even during dry weather, coastal Sydney's wastewater is only treated to a basic primary level before discharge into the ocean. Therefore, any detergents, paints, chemicals, medicines and cooking oils that we pour down the sink or drain can be a source of pollution of our harbour and the ocean. Instead put them out with your garbage and use biodegradable detergents in the kitchen. Fats and oils from cooking can also clog pipes both on your property and in the streets, requiring expensive plumbing repairs and higher water bills. Therefore, try to avoid pouring fat, cooking oil, food scraps and sauces down the kitchen sink. Instead scrape these items into a jar for disposal in your normal household garbage.
11. Car wash water contains detergents, degreasers, dirt and oil which enters the stormwater system and can kill fish and plants when it reaches our waterways. Consider washing your car on your lawn or at a car wash facility, rather than on the road or your driveway. Where this is not possible, use a bucket and biodegradable soap and only use the hose to rinse off to minimise stormwater pollution.