



The 3Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Cutting Waste

Garbage is a growing problem in Australia. Each year we recycle more, but we also create more garbage as our population grows and consumption increases. It is a problem we all create, so we can all play a part in reducing the mountain of rubbish going to landfill.

It's quite easy to put the 3Rs into practice in your homes, schools and workplaces.

The small but worthwhile changes to the way we do things will soon become second nature and can make a big difference.

Why Reduce Waste?

There are many good reasons for minimising the waste we create:

1. It conserves valuable resources, including:

- Minerals – such as bauxite used to make aluminium and sand to make glass.
- Energy – used in mining, harvesting, manufacturing and transporting.
- Forests – used to make paper, cardboard and wood products.
- Petroleum – used to make plastics.
- Landfill sites – by extending their life.

2. It saves money

- If you waste less, you get more out of what you have.
- Waste disposal costs are reduced.
- Businesses become more efficient.
- Household incomes stretch further.

3. It reduces impact on the environment, for example:

- Fewer natural ecosystems need to be affected by mining, harvesting and landfill.
- Reduced Greenhouse gas emissions by using less fossil fuels.



The 3Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The 3Rs are a simple guide to help everyone minimize waste at home, school and work.

When trying to cut your waste, remember that the 3Rs are in order of importance: first *reduce*, then *reuse* and finally *recycle* what's left.





Reduce

Reduce simply means to live more carefully so that you have less rubbish to get rid of later. This could mean:

- Shop Smart – look for products with minimal packaging and preferably packaging that is recycled and recyclable.
- Make meals at home instead of buying convenience meals and junk food.
- Make gifts and cards for family and friends with materials you already have.
- Maintain and repair clothes, toys, tools and appliances instead of replacing them.
- Minimise the disposable products you buy and use them carefully.
- Put a “no junk mail” sign on your letter box.

Reuse

Reusing means to use the same item more than once, preferably many times, rather than throwing it out after one use. It saves money, energy and resources that would otherwise have been used to make a new product and means that the product doesn't go to landfill.

There are lots of ways you can reuse things around the home. Here are a few ideas:

- Reuse empty glass jars for storage in your kitchen, shed or classroom.
- Use a basket or cloth bag when you go shopping.
- Hire, share or borrow items you don't use very often.
- Open envelopes carefully so they can be reused.
- Use small soft drink bottles as drink bottles for school, sport or outings.
- Buy second-hand books and clothes.
- Arrange a garage sale so others can reuse your unwanted items.
- Save margarine and icecream containers to use for storage or donate them to your local school.
- Buy reuseable items instead of disposable ones (eg. hankies instead of tissues, rechargeable batteries instead of one-use batteries).

Recycle

Recycling means to return a waste product to a factory where it is remade into either the same product or something different. For example, used aluminium cans can be recycled back into cans or into engine blocks for new cars. Recycling saves landfill space, rescues the resources that went into the original item and saves energy. You can recycle food scraps and garden waste yourself by composting or worm farming.

Materials that can be recycled from most homes include:

- Paper and cardboard
- Glass bottles and jars
- Aluminium cans and foils
- Code 1,2 and 3 plastics
- Steel cans
- Milk and juice cartons



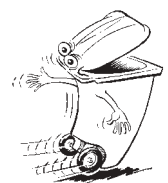
You can take other items to be recycled, including:

- Plastic supermarket bags
- Laser cartridges and ribbons
- Wine bottle corks
- Car parts (tyres, batteries, car bodies and motor oil)
- Mobile phones
- Building materials (timber, concrete and bricks)
- Metals (lead, steel and copper)
- Fire extinguishers (yellow halon type)

Check with your local council for details about recycling in your area. Only put out for kerbside recycling those items that are collected by your council, putting in the wrong materials can contaminate recyclables. More information about the 3Rs and particular items are in other Fact Sheets in this series.

Resources

www.planetark.com.au



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