

Second largest emitter of greenhouse gases

Power stations are the largest emitters of greenhouse gases in Australia. You may be surprised to learn that our food production, preparation and delivery system is the second largest emitter.

This is because so much energy goes into making food. Soil, water, natural resources and energy are used to produce, harvest, transport, process, package, distribute and market food products. When food is wasted, so are all those resources that went into it. And so is all that money you invest in buying the food.

In NSW, food waste is the second largest commercial and industry waste – amounting to over 300,000 tonnes in Sydney alone¹. Between June and August 2008, it was found that 74 per cent of total food waste in Sydney was wasted before it even got to the consumer².



The benefits of recycling food waste

If you are concerned about your bottom line and the environment, one of the best things you can do is to reduce and recycle food waste.

For every tonne of food kept out of landfill, 0.9 tonnes of greenhouse gases are avoided³.

Simple ways to cut food waste costs

Think in terms of the waste hierarchy. How can you avoid, reduce, reuse or recycle?

- Avoid** → **Do we need it?**
- Reduce** → **Do we need so much?**
- Reuse** → **Can we use it again?**
- Recycle** → **Can someone else use it or convert it into something new?**



AVOID

Portion your meals and servings appropriately. Downsize rather than supersize when it comes to food.

It is best to provide customers with options of serving sizes and side orders, so they can decide how much food they want. Pre-portioning dishes like cake or lasagne prevents staff serving differing sizes and results in left over food being thrown away.

Visit lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au/business for more practical tips and ideas to avoid food waste.

1 DECCW (2009). Commercial and Industrial waste in Sydney-overview. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/warr/CommercialIndustrialWaste.htm>

2 DECCW (2010). Audit of Commercial and Industrial waste in Sydney-overview-full report. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/warr/CommercialIndustrialWaste.htm>

3 Commonwealth Department of Climate Change (2009), *National Greenhouse Accounts (NGA) Factors*.

REDUCE

Develop good stock control and management practices.

Inform your staff about the difference between 'use by' and 'best before' dates. After the 'use by date', food may not be eaten or sold as it may be unsafe. However many food products are still safe to eat after the 'best before' date, though they may have lost some quality⁴.

Store food properly to ensure its usable life is maximised. To make sure food lasts until its use-by-date, follow storage instructions like keeping it refrigerated. Check fridge and freezer temperatures and seals regularly.

REUSE

You can donate quality edible food to food charities such as OzHarvest, Second Bite and Food Bank NSW, all of which provide food for people in need.

Visit lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au/business to use our Food Donation Toolkit. It provides everything you need to know about safely donating food to charity.

Reuse unsold food creatively to make other meals where it is safe to do so. For example, unsold cooked chickens can be reused in chicken salads, pasta bakes, sandwiches or soups.

Eliminate excess garnishes. You can use off-cuts from one dish as garnishes or in stocks.

RECYCLE

Go to BusinessRecycling.com.au to find local recycling services that accept food waste. This website allows you to search for service providers in your area that collect food and other materials for recycling.

Ask your recycling service for staff training signs and innovative systems. Negotiate a way of working with your contractor to get a reduced fee for pick up.

Visit lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au/business for ideas to engage your staff in food waste avoidance and recycling.

Here are some other ways to improve recycling:

- Recycle meat waste, including deli items, because this is in high demand by recyclers. It must be free of contaminants, such as plastic wrap and polystyrene trays.
- Drain cooking fats and oils into a separate oil drum and send to recycling facilities which convert the oil into products like biofuels. It is illegal to throw fats and oils down the drain.
- Ask your recycling service about sending food waste to an organics recycling facility.
- For small amounts of food waste, consider establishing an onsite worm farm.

It pays to learn what can be recycled. Common food waste contaminants include meat bones, carcasses and man-made materials such as plastic, metals and glass. Food contaminated with these things may be unsuitable for recycling. By eliminating such contaminants, you will greatly increase the acceptability of food waste for recycling.

Make sure your staff, contractors and cleaners follow your recycling program and that they put food waste in the correct bins. Seek feedback, raise staff awareness and train them to ensure continuing success.

⁴ NSW Food Authority information for consumers. Viewed 12 July 2010, www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumers/food-labels/label-facts/best-before-and-use-by-dates/

For further information

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EPA 2012/0352 November 2012
ISBN 978-1-74293-887-5

Published by:

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TTY: (02) 9211 4723
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au Web: www.epa.nsw.gov.au
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