



Why we should be avoiding food waste

Money

Imagine throwing \$3,800 in the bin. Yes, in the garbage bin. No way right! Well that is how much food the average NSW household wastes each year*. Or to look at it another way, the average Australia household throws out 20% of the food they purchase. Yes, you read that correctly. 20%. That. Is. A. Lot.!!

For individuals, food waste is an avoidable financial cost.

As a guide to what you may be doing, take a note of the food you throw out over a couple of weeks. You will probably be surprised by the amount of food and the money wasted.

Environmental Impact

Australian consumers throw away around 3.1 million tonnes of food—that's close to 17,000 grounded 747 jumbo jets. Another 2.2 million tonnes is disposed of by the commercial and industrial sector.

When food waste is sent to landfill, it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.

The impact of food waste also includes the energy, fuel and water used to grow food that may not be used. As most people consume food purchased from a retailer, the energy and fuel usage extends (but not limited to) transportation, refrigeration and packaging.

Tips for avoiding food waste

Planning

Shop smart and realistically. Think about what you will need in the days ahead. Check your fridge and pantry before you shop. Make a shopping list.

Don't overserve food. Massive portions driven by the restaurant culture does not need to apply in your own home even when serving guests.

Storage

Store leftovers properly and actually eat them. Label your leftovers so you can keep track of how long they've been in your fridge or freezer, and incorporate them into your daily or weekly routine.

Store food in the right places. Some fruit and vegies are better stored at room temperature rather than the fridge, like bananas.

Keep food that needs to be eaten quickly at the front of your fridge. Leftovers pushed to the back too easily are forgotten about.

[For more storage information click here.](#)

Planning

There is a difference between USE BY and BEST BEFORE dates

Use-by dates are often labelled on fresh high protein foods such as dairy, meat and seafood. These dates should be observed.

With other foods the expiry dates are often **Best Before** and are an indication of food quality NOT safety.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Can your food be eaten?

If you unexpectedly find yourself with excess food is there a food bank or charity in your area that would appreciate it? What about taking it to the office or your local community meeting/get together?

Do you have neighbours or work colleagues with livestock? Less than fresh fruit or vegetables may be unappealing to you but a treat for a chicken or goat.

Composting

Your compost bin will love food but it should NOT be treated as an alternative 'waste bin'. Avoiding food waste really is the priority.

Composting is ideally for your food scraps (eg fruit and veggie peelings), however it is part of a solution of stopping food waste ending up in landfill.

Shoalhaven City Council provides free composting workshops at various times of the year.

To be notified of future workshop dates sign up to Waste Services monthly 'ReNewsable' newsletter, via email at wasteadmin@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

Want more information?

[Visit NSW EPA Love Food Hate Waste Campaign](#)