

HOME eco challenge



Know Your Waste!

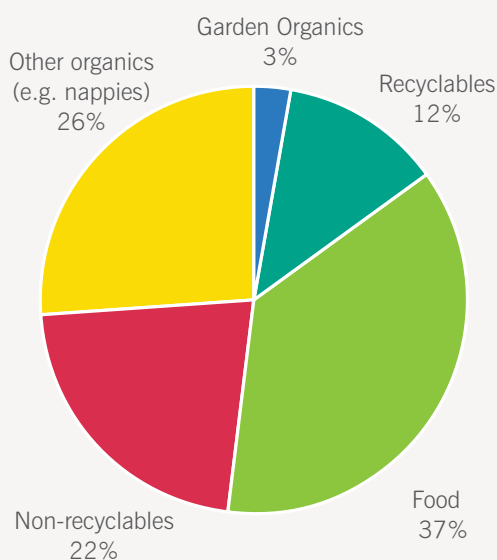
What is waste? We tend to define waste as something that is no longer needed, not useful, worthless, broken or stuff to be thrown away. We throw most of this waste into our bin or out into Council clean-ups without giving it a second thought. But if we want to reduce our impact on the planet, we need think about what we are really throwing away. Everything that ends up in landfill is a precious resource - whether plastic derived from petroleum, food from a farm, metal mined from the earth, paper or cardboard from pulped timber, or glass from mined sand. Reducing the amount of waste we generate and discard is a vital step towards becoming an eco-friendly community.



Waste: The Inner West Story

Breakdown of waste in the red-lid bin of the average inner west household

*Average data taken from Ashfield and Leichhardt Councils 2015 waste audit.



We can significantly reduce our waste going to landfill by improving recycling and by composting food and other organics.

Where does your waste go?

Rubbish placed in your red-lid garbage bin is taken to Clyde Waste Transfer Station, from where it is transported to a landfill site and placed in the ground, where much of it remains for hundreds of years.

Materials placed out for recycling are taken to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Smithfield, where recyclables are sorted into different types (such as glass, paper, plastics & metals), before being sent to different manufacturing plants for further processing. Visit the [Visy website](#) for more information.

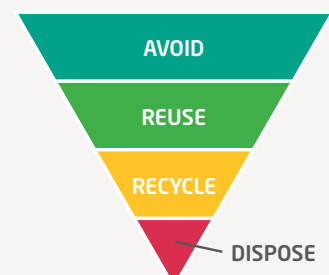
For residents who have a garden organics bin, this material is taken to a transfer station at Greenacre and forwarded to a processing plant where it is converted into a range of composts and mulches for use by the public sector and horticultural industry.

By placing your waste in the correct bin you will reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

How can I reduce the amount of waste that I produce?

The Waste Hierarchy

The waste hierarchy shows that the most important way to reduce waste is to avoid it in the first place. Reuse and recycling are also important, while disposal should be the last waste option.



Avoid

The best way to reduce the amount of waste you produce is to avoid creating it in the first place!

Avoid Plastic Bags

Say no to plastic bags! Take reusable bags, a trolley or backpack instead. If you drive to the shops, having a set of reusable bags in the car can ensure you always have them with you, or if you shop after work keep a set of bags next to your office desk.



Avoid Food Waste

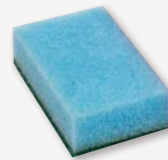
In the inner west, food waste accounts for 35% of waste in residents' red lid bins. In NSW, the average household throws away \$1,000 of food each year. You can avoid food waste by menu planning, shopping to a list, serving suitable portion sizes and using leftovers.

For more information on avoiding food waste see the [NSW Love Food Hate Waste website](#).

Reuse

Reuse products and choose items that can be reused again and again.

Reuse is Easy



Choose reusable products instead of disposable ones. Try using a sponge instead of a paper towel to clean up spills in the kitchen.

Always print double-sided. Place a tray beside your printer at home or in the office to collect paper printed only on one side. Use the blank side for printing drafts or as note paper.

Reduce Packaging Waste

Avoiding packaging waste is something we can all do to reduce waste.

Choose products that have the least packaging, or have packaging that can be recycled. Use products with refills. Buy in bulk or buy concentrated products where possible.

For more ideas visit the [Your Energy Savings website](#)

Donate Unwanted Goods

Your trash may be someone else's treasure.

Before putting unwanted items out for Council collection try finding a new home for them by donating them to a [local charity store](#) or advertise them on [Freecycle](#), an online sharing network.

Avoid Junk Mail

A large portion of recycling is unwanted mail. Placing a 'No Junk Mail' sticker on your letterbox will ensure you don't receive most catalogues. To get your free sticker call or email Council on **9716 1991** or sustainability@ashfield.nsw.gov.au

Registering your details with the [ADMA Do Not Mail Service](#) will ensure that you do not receive mail from direct marketers such as banks, insurance companies, publishers, charities and mail order companies.

Upcycling

Try upcycling to turn an item you no longer need into something you would use.

Plant some flowers in those old gumboots you were going to throw away and avoid buying new pots. Make a cake stand from your grandmothers old plates. If you aren't crafty yourself let someone else do the work for you – visit [The Bower](#) for great ideas or check out the [Treading Lightly](#) program for upcycling workshops.

Recycle

Recycling involves converting something used into a new product. Recycling at home is easy. **Ashfield residents** put all recyclables in the yellow-lid bin. **Leichhardt residents** sort recyclables into the yellow-lid and blue-lid bins.

Almost all containers from your kitchen and bathroom can be placed in your yellow-lid recycling bin. These are sent to a recycling facility that uses both manual and automated processes to separate glass, plastics, metals and paper products. Containers must be empty but don't need to be washed.

For more info about recycling visit the website for your Inner West Council service area – [Ashfield](#) & [Leichhardt](#).



Did you know?

- Recycling one tonne of paper saves cutting down 13 trees!
- Plastic containers are recycled into all kinds of items including picnic tables and park benches, carpet fibre, clothing, automotive parts, speed humps, paint brushes, sign posts, new plastic bottles and much, much more.

It's human nature to take the easy option, so make recycling in your household easier by having a separate recycling bin or bag in your kitchen next to your rubbish bin.

Recycling Soft Plastics

Remember that plastic bags cannot be put in the recycling bin. Plastic shopping bags can be returned to your supermarket for recycling. Many Coles and Woolworths supermarkets now have drop off points for a wide range of soft plastics. Store up all your bread bags, pasta packaging, cereal bags, and biscuit packets then drop them off when you do your shopping. [REDcycle](#) will turn them into recycled plastic products like school benches.

Recycling Organics

Did you know that 50 per cent of our waste is organic material that can be recycled at home using a compost bin or worm farm? Inner West Council residents in the Ashfield and Leichhardt service areas can purchase a discounted compost bin or worm farm through [Compost Revolution](#). Compost Revolution also provides information through an online tutorial to help you get started with composting or worm farming.



You can use a worm farm even if you live in an apartment.

Whenever you're out and about and there is nowhere to recycle your newspaper or drink container, take them home with you to recycle in your yellow-lid bin.

Recycling Household Items

White goods, mattresses and electronic items are recycled wherever possible. Residents in the Leichhardt service area can take these items to the [Weekend Transfer Station](#) for recycling. Ashfield Council holds regular [e-waste drop-off days](#). Residents in the Ashfield service area can also place e-waste, mattresses and whitegoods out during [general council clean ups](#) in and these will be collected separately for recycling. Other items, such as furniture, cannot be recycled by the councils. Instead, [The Bower Collection & Rehoming Service](#) is a free service for residents to use.



What else can be recycled?

As well as kerbside collection of recyclable items, the Inner West Council offers a number of other recycling services.

Batteries can be dropped into the collection boxes at Ashfield Library, Balmain Library, Haberfield Library and Leichhardt Library. Batteries contain heavy metals and other materials that can be reclaimed by specialised processing but are hazardous if placed in landfill.



Light bulbs can be dropped into the collection boxes at Ashfield Library and Haberfield Library, or at Leichhardt's Community Recycling Centre (for Leichhardt service area's residents only).

Mobile phones and printer cartridges can be dropped into the collection boxes at Ashfield Library and Haberfield Library, or dropped off at most Australia Post or Officeworks locations. Mobile phones are collected by Mobile Muster, a product stewardship program of the mobile phone industry. Printer cartridges are collected by Cartridges 4 Planet Ark, a voluntary extended producer responsibility program funded by manufacturers.

Spectacles are collected at Ashfield Library and Haberfield Library on behalf of a local charity to be reused.

Electronic wastes can be dropped off at regular e-waste events at Ashfield Depot located at 7 Prospect Road, Summer Hill or at Leichhardt Weekend Transfer Station at 50-54 Moore Street, Leichhardt. The items are sent to a waste contractor that separates and processes them into secondary raw materials - primarily plastics, glass and metals.

Mattresses can be recycled in the Ashfield service area by booking a household clean-up and telling Customer Services that you have a mattress to be collected. For residents of the Leichhardt service area, mattresses can be dropped off at the Weekend Transfer Station. Mattresses are taken apart and separated into metal, wood and cloth that can all be recycled. For example, the cloth and fibre is used to make punching bags.

Old fridges can be collected for recycling through Fridge Buy Back. Fridges are professionally degassed and the metal component is recycled. To find out more or to book a collection visit www.fridgebuyback.com.au.

For more information see the Inner West Council website for your service area – Ashfield and Leichhardt.

Related Links

<https://innerwestcouncil.wordpress.com/>
www.visy.com.au

www.adma.com.au/do-not-mail
www.recyclingnearyou.com.au

www.freecycle.org
www.lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au
<http://bower.org.au/>

CONTACT US

For more information please contact the Inner West Council – Leichhardt Service Centre, Sustainability Team

PO Box 45 Leichhardt NSW 2040
Tel (02) 9367 9381 sustainability@lmc.nsw.gov.au

Dispose

Material that is disposed of in your red-lid bin ends up in landfill. Disposal should be your last option, when all the other choices – **avoidance, reuse and recycling** – have been tried first.

So, why is putting waste in landfill a bad thing?



When we send waste to a landfill it gets buried and sits in the ground for hundreds of years. A traditional landfill is an anaerobic environment (without oxygen), so waste takes many years to decompose and often

does not break down completely. Another problem with landfill sites is the liquid waste known as leachate. Leachate can be a very toxic acidic liquid, that can do a great deal of damage to the environment if it escapes into surrounding soils and the water table. Landfills also produce gas, which consists mostly of methane and carbon dioxide, both of which are greenhouse gases, as well as sulphur dioxide (rotten egg gas).

Once a landfill is closed, monitoring of groundwater and gases produced by the landfill must take place for a period of 30-50 years. Often this land cannot ever be built upon as it is unstable. This means that eventually we will run out of space for landfill.

Chemicals and Hazardous Wastes

Not all wastes are safe for landfill as they can leach out into groundwater. Hazardous wastes like chemicals, paints, car batteries and gas bottles should not be put in your red-lid bin but should be taken to a CleanOut event where they will be safely disposed.

Visit NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for more information or to find a collection event near you.

