

Paths to Sustainability - Businesses

10 ways to reduce your business' eco-footprint



1

start a workplace kitchen garden

Growing your own food **reduces your food miles** and CO² emissions. It also helps to create green space and provides access to seasonal produce, no matter how small.



2

reduce waste & start composting

Australian businesses throw away more than 1 million tonnes of food every year.¹ If you're a food service operator, the **Wise Up on Waste**² toolkit can help prevent food waste while reducing costs and improving sustainability. Secondly, you can separate organic waste and arrange a collection service so that you divert it from landfill (see *What's Food Got To Do With It?* for more information).

Encourage staff to compost their food scraps using a bench-top composting kit or bin. Use the compost to feed your kitchen garden, distribute it to local gardeners or take it home.



3

avoid packaging, buy in bulk or reusable containers

Plastic takes up to **1,000 years to break down**, so encourage staff or patrons to **use reusable containers and coffee cups** where possible.

Buy produce in **bulk** to minimise packaging, or request that produce be delivered in reusable or returnable containers.

4

donate leftover food

Help reduce sending waste to landfill by donating food leftovers from business catering and functions to a food donation program near you. See the **Food Donation Toolkit**³ for more information.



5

buy chemical free, organic or biodynamic

Organic and biodynamic farming methods improve soil health and reduce reliance on fossil fuels as no synthetic chemicals or pesticides are used. Purchase organic or biodynamic milk for the staff kitchen and ask any caterers you engage with if they can use sustainable produce when catering for your business.



7

increase vegetarian and dairy-free options on the menu

In Australia, methane emissions from cattle and sheep account for **10% of total greenhouse gas emissions**.⁴ More meat and dairy free options on the menu can help reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and provide customers with more choice. Promoting **meat-free Mondays** is another initiative which can reduce emissions.

6

buy local & seasonal

Does your business order a staff fruit box? Use the **Sustainable Shopping Close to You guide** to find a box system that uses local, organic and seasonal fruit.

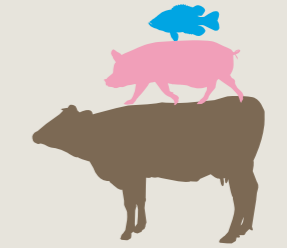
If you are a food outlet, work with your suppliers to **source local produce** and promote this to your customers.



8

choose free range pork, chicken & eggs

Sustainably managed free range or organic farms are able to reduce or better manage the environmental impacts of farming by following a number of ecological practices such as appropriate animal stocking densities and integrated farming. Choose free range or organic and help support environmentally-sound farming systems⁵.



9

choose sustainably farmed meat & dairy & sustainable seafood

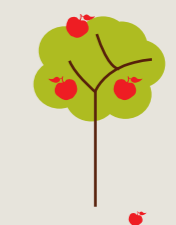
Sustainable meat and dairy farms employ good environmental practices such as animal rotation, pasture feeding (as opposed to grain feeding), water recycling and management, composting, tree planting and soil health practices, and use fewer non-renewable resources. Ask questions of your supplier and use the guides on the Sustainable Table (sustainabletable.org.au) or Local Harvest (localharvest.org.au) websites to find sustainably farmed meat and dairy close to you.

Three quarters of the world's oceans are officially over-exploited or fished right to their limit. Use the Sustainable Seafood Guide (included in this Guide) to select sustainable species in order to preserve fish populations for future generations.

10

develop relationships & ask questions

Asking questions of your produce suppliers, caterers and decision makers is an important step in promoting positive change. Your requests as a supplier and a customer demonstrate demand for sustainable food and **encourage changes** in the supply chain.



1. The National Waste Report, http://www.ephc.gov.au/sites/default/files/WasteMgt_Nat_Waste_Report_FINAL_20_FullReport_201005_0.pdf, viewed 23/1/2013
 2. 'Wise Up on Waste' toolkit by Unilever Food Solutions, available via the FoodWise website <http://foodwise.com.au/food-waste/business-food-waste/the-wise-up-on-waste-toolkit-for-foodservice-operators/>
 3. Available at <http://foodwise.com.au/food-waste/food-donation-tool-kit/>

5. CSIRO, Greenhouse gases in Australian agriculture: understanding the role of soils, forests and livestock methane, 2012, http://www.csiro.au/Outcomes/Climate/Reducing-GHG/Carbon-Australian-agriculture_CLI.aspx, viewed 22/01/2013
 6 Visit Sustainable Table's free range egg and chicken guide for more info: <http://www.sustainabletable.org.au/Hungryforinfo/Freerangeeggandchickenguide/tabid/113/Default.aspx>