

Food Waste in NSW

Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW



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What are we doing?

Over \$7.7 million in funding for local and regional sustainable food projects



The NSW Government has provided over \$7.7 million over 4 years through the Environmental Trust, for local government projects which address the sustainability of local food systems and food waste recovery.

Notably, nearly \$3.35 million has been given to three major regional projects that address sustainable local food systems including:

Almost \$2 million given to the *Future Proofing Northern Rivers Communities* project, undertaken by eight project partners in the north-east region of NSW (Rous Water and Lismore, Byron, Ballina, Tweed, Kyogle, Richmond Valley and Clarence Valley Councils).

Over \$1.1 million given to Wollongong, Kiama and Shellharbour Councils for the *Illawarra Biodiversity and Local Food Strategy for Climate Change* project, and

Almost \$250,000 given to Coffs Harbour and Bellingen Councils for the *Local Food Futures* Project.

Although the scale of these projects and specific activities differ, all three of these regional food projects will provide long-term strategic planning frameworks for their regions to support and improve local food production systems. This will increase local food security, improve local food sustainability and reduce greenhouse emissions and transport relating to food. They will also build community knowledge and skills around sustainable sourcing and consumption of food.

Three other major Urban Sustainability Program projects being undertaken address reduction and recovery of food and organic waste from households, education around local nutrient recycling and community connection with the regional food production system. These projects are:

The *Reducing the Ecological Footprint of the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney* project, run by Randwick, Waverly and Woollahra Councils and funded for a total of \$1,875,000 to. The *Compost Revolution Program and Trial* is a key

What are we doing?

Community Greening Program

At least 140 Community Gardens



plus 68 Youth Garden Programs

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The Botanic Gardens Trust also run at least 140 community gardening projects in public housing estates or on unused public land. An important aspect of this initiative is the Youth Community Greening program, which currently supports 68 separate youth gardening programs for disadvantaged and at-risk school children and teenagers.

How much food does NSW waste?

Households



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Food is the single largest component of household waste in NSW, almost 38 per cent by weight in the average bin. Recent waste audit data compiled by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (DECCW) found that this amounts to an enormous 800,000 tonnes of food waste annually. That's 315kg of food waste per household per year that is now disposed to landfill across NSW every year.

How much food does NSW waste?

Businesses

Over 300,000 tonnes per year in Sydney

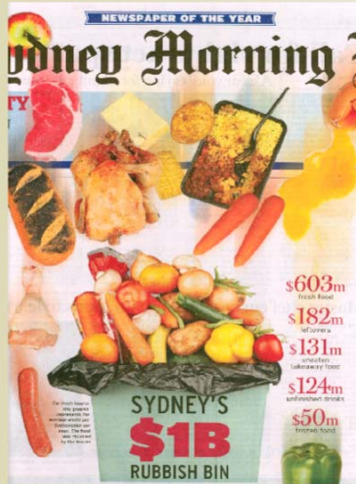


76 percent pre-consumer

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In Sydney, the commercial sector wastes less food than households, (over 300,000 tonnes annually or 17 percent of the mixed commercial and industrial waste stream). The majority of this (about 76 percent) is wasted during manufacture and processing, rather than post-consumption, such as through restaurants.

Wasting food is a money issue



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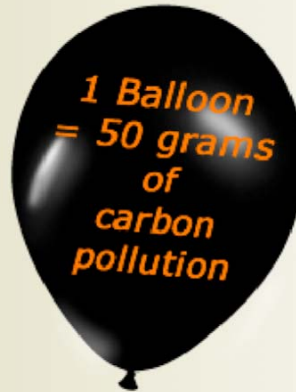
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Recent research by the University of Western Sydney estimates that Sydney households throw away more than \$1 billion worth of food each year. This is made up of: \$600 million worth of fresh food, \$182 million worth of leftovers, \$131 million worth of uneaten takeaway food, as well as unfinished drinks and frozen food. This is more than the combined revenue of all the farms within the Sydney metropolitan basin.

At the national level, the Australia Institute found in 2004 that \$5.3 billion worth of household food purchases were thrown away uneaten, which according to Australian Food and Grocery Council means approximately one in every seven shopping bags worth of food purchased in Australia is sent to landfill each year. This makes food the most wasted of all items in Australian households.

Wasting food is an environmental issue

**NSW sends over
1,100,000 tonnes of
food waste to landfill
per year**



**Almost
20 billion
black
balloons**

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The federal Department of Climate Change calculate that for every tonne of food waste diverted from landfill, approximately nine tenths of a tonne of CO₂-equivalent emissions can be saved. That is a ratio of almost one for one. Currently there is well over 1,100,000 tonnes of food disposed to landfill across NSW each year. If we could avoid or recover all of this waste it would amount to a carbon pollution saving of 990,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalants or almost 20 billion black balloons (19.8 billion x 50grams).

Why do people waste good food?



*“It’s cheaper to buy in bulk so you get wastage...
and the portions are too big”*

*“We have a hot chook for tea then forget about it in
the fridge and throw it away”*

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Our recent social research shows that the majority of people in Sydney:
are unaware of the impacts of wasting food;
underestimate the sheer amount of food that is wasted;
waste food in the household simply due to a lack of time, organisation and
planning.

We found that the main reasons for householders wasting food are:

Cooking too much

Forgetting about leftovers in the fridge or freezer

Not knowing how to use leftovers

Not planning meals or menus

Buying too much or being tempted by specials

Not checking food stocks before shopping.



DECCW is working directly with both the business community and with consumers to address some of these issues at the state level, and is funding other organisations such as local government to address issues at the local and regional level.

Food Waste Avoidance Program

- **Community education program**
- **Research**
- **Supply chain**
- **Tools, tips, recipes**
- **Resources and events**





**Looking for
program partners...**

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Today's challenge



Sustainable food production system

Society

Sustainable food consumption system

Society

Avoid unnecessary food wastage

Individual

Save money and
reduce your carbon footprint

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In addition to this group's mandate today, I would also like to set an individual challenge for every person in this room – one which is entirely achievable on your own. From today onwards, I challenge you to stop feeding that extra place at your table – the garbage bin – and simply avoid excess consumption of food and unnecessarily throwing away all that uneaten food. This might mean a few small changes to your habits like:

planning your meals better,

being creative with your leftovers,

checking the fridge or pantry before shopping,

only buying what you need; or

not being tempted by those bulk specials that you know you'll never finish.

I guarantee that this will not cost you a cent, in fact it will save you both money and time, and best of all it will make a big difference to our planet.