



# SUSTAINABLE LIVING TASMANIA

## Sustainable Shopping

*“That happiness is to be attained through limitless material acquisition is denied by every religion and philosophy known to humankind, but is preached incessantly by every television set.” Robert Bellah*

### General Principles

Try to ignore fashion and advertisements, which encourage unnecessary consumption.

As far as possible, buy local goods – they use less energy to reach you, create less pollution, and employ local people.

Consider the life cycle of the product – what is it made from – renewable resources? Sustainably managed resources? Will it last a long time? If it breaks or stops working, can it be repaired? Will it decompose after it has served its purpose? Can it be recycled?

Choose well-made products that will last, rather than cheap, shoddy ones.

Donate unwanted items to op/ tip shops.

Avoid unnecessary packaging and take your own shopping bags.

When you feel the need for retail therapy, treat yourself to an alternative pleasant experience (a massage, a movie, a picnic with a friend, a walk on the beach or a day in bed with a good library book).

By choosing products with less environmental impact, you also encourage manufacturers to produce more sustainably (for example availability of free-range eggs has increased because of animal welfare campaigners and consumer demand).

### Environmental Claims

Marketing terms like environmentally friendly, eco-safe, recyclable and biodegradable are meaningless without further explanation. For example, does the claim relate to the packaging, product, some of the product components (but not all) or everything?

**Recycled** – a product label should say how much is recycled and whether it is post-consumer waste (already used) or pre-consumer waste (manufacturing waste).

**Biodegradable** – all components must break down to elements found in nature.

**Photodegradable** – (e.g. plastics) break down when exposed to light but are not very degradable when buried in landfills.

The Good Environmental Choice Label looks at whole product life assessment. See the Australian Environmental Labelling Association Website [www.aela.org.au](http://www.aela.org.au)

### Electrical Appliances

Check the star ratings and kilowatt-hours per year on the labels. (Buy the most stars but the least kWh per year.)

Choose the right sized appliance for your needs – a bigger fridge or washing machine than you need will waste energy.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs are a good idea in areas that are lit over long periods. They use a fifth of the energy of traditional globes.

Consider a solar hot water heater if your building has a good northerly aspect.

For lists of energy-efficient appliances see [www.energyrating.gov.au](http://www.energyrating.gov.au)

### Water-efficient Appliances

AAA shower-heads conserve water.

Front-loading washing machines use less energy and water than top-loaders.

Aerator fittings on taps will reduce the flow of water in sinks and basins while still giving the same sensation of water volume.

Connect timers to garden hoses to prevent over-watering by sprinklers.

## Recycled Paper

**Copy Paper** for printing and photocopying – Evolve (Made in the UK), Canon 100 (Made in Austria), Officeworks Recycled (Made in Austria).

**Printing Paper** for publishing – Botany Brown (made in Australia by Visy), Cyclus (Made in Denmark).

**Bleached Paper** – paper mills that bleach with chlorine produce dioxin, an extremely toxic chemical (causing cancer, decreased immunity and behavioural disorders). Choose oxygen-bleached products.

**Toilet Paper** – there are many brands of recycled toilet paper available.

## Cleaning Products

Consider green cleaning alternatives such as bicarbonate of soda and vinegar (see Sustainable Living Tasmania's 'Green Cleaning' pamphlet).

For commercial detergents, check that they are phosphate-free and chlorine-free, and look for the biodegradability standard – Australian Standard AS 4351 or the International Standard ISO 7827 (which is stricter).

Avoid products (often the surfactant) containing petrochemicals (or mineral oils). Choose plant-based oils which break down much more rapidly. (Because of the large number of petrochemical ingredients used, it is often easier to look for products that use plant-oils instead.)

## Produce and Dry Goods

Organically produced products are grown without the use of synthetic pesticides or fertilizers, which contaminate soils and water systems.

Supporting local farmers and businesses and buying in bulk whenever possible

eliminates excess packaging, transportation and energy consumption.

## Sustainable Seafood

*Please note:* the names of fish are extremely variable, not only between states but also within Tasmania. The CSIRO is currently working to standardise fish names in Australia.

### *Most Sustainable*

Blue grenadier, blue-eye trevalla, calamari, flathead, mackerel, mussels-blue, pink ling, snapper, yellow-fin tuna, oysters, whiting.

### *Over-fished*

Trevally, orange roughy, blue-fin tuna, rock lobster, hake (gemfish), flake (shark), southern scallops, wild kill prawns.

Visit [www.amcs.org.au](http://www.amcs.org.au) for updates

## Genetically Engineered Food

Possible genetically engineered ingredients in Australia include soy, canola, corn and cottonseed oil. They might be included in animal feed and therefore potentially in dairy products, eggs or meat.

Genetically modified (GM) ingredients are required by law (since 2001) to be labelled in Australia but there are exemptions for food prepared in restaurants, bakeries and take-aways, and ingredients derived from GM plants that are believed to have little genetic material left after refining – added flavours, starches, sugars and cooking oils.

Under current labelling laws, an ingredient list would look like this:

Ingredients: soya flour (genetically modified), vegetable oil, preservative (282) . . .

To avoid genetically modified products, choose fresh unprocessed food, 'certified organic', 'GE-free', 'Not Genetically Modified'.

Visit [www.truefood.org.au](http://www.truefood.org.au) for companies and products that guarantee no genetic modification.

## Plastic Recycling Codes

In Tasmania, food and beverage containers with codes (1), (2) and (3) on the bottom can be recycled.

### *Plastic identification codes*

- 1 PET Clear plastic drink bottles
- 2 HDPE Transparent milk, yoghurt and shampoo bottles
- 3 UPVC Clear cordial and juice bottles

Manufacturers can turn recycled plastic into detergent bottles, compost bins, carpet fibres, plumbing pipes and polar fleece jackets.

## Sustainable Timber

Recycled timbers can be bought in Southern Tasmania at the Resource Tip Shops (South Hobart, Glenorchy and Margate), Second Chance Re-Use Shop (Mornington), and Uptons (North Hobart and Mornington), who also sell other building materials such doors, windows and roofing material.

When buying new timber, choose plantation-grown timber and avoid timber grown in native forests.

Wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) meets strict environmental standards and is internationally recognised.

For help with choices see the Wilderness Society One Stop Timbershop <http://timbershop.wilderness.org.au>

Or see the *Forest-Friendly Building Timbers* book available from Sustainable Living Tasmania.

## Gift Ideas

'Give twice' by choosing gifts from charity shops such as Red Cross, Sustainable Living Tasmania, the Green Shop or the Wilderness Shop.

### **Adults:**

Gift subscription to an environmental group or journal  
Cane basket or permanent shopping bags  
Compost bin or worm farm  
Yoghurt-maker, fruit dryer or fruit juicer  
Rain gauge, weather vane, barometer  
Battery charger  
Pedometer  
Ph soil tester, water timer, gardening books  
Flora/fauna field guides, walk guides, maps  
Recycled notepaper or notebooks  
Indoor plants, native plants  
Bird feeder, bird bath, nest box, binoculars  
Cloth serviettes and/or tablecloth

### **Children:**

Wooden or long-lasting toys (e.g. Lego™)  
Gardening tools, seeds and pots  
Sandpit or paddling pool  
Dried flower press  
Kite or kite-making set  
Modelling clay or playdough  
Aquarium, terrarium, frog pond, worm farm  
Magnifying glass or microscope  
Books about plants and animals  
Sketch pad and pencils  
Snorkel, mask and flippers  
Spot-lighting torch  
Collage kit (scissors, glue, old magazines)  
Recycled paper-making set

### **Teenagers:**

Clothing from natural fibres  
Musical instruments  
Telescope, binoculars or microscope  
Star chart or calendar  
Environmentally sound cosmetics  
Beeswax candles  
Compass, backpack, sleeping bag/mat  
Walk maps and guides  
Gift subscription to environmental or human rights group

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