

Summer
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green living



IN GOSFORD
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Welcome to the Summer Issue of Green Living News!

Summer is here and for many of us that means the celebration of Christmas is just around the corner.

This issue of Green Living will encourage you to reduce the impact that your Christmas has on our local and global environment.

I hope you will also find the information useful when organising any social or religious occasions in the New Year.

The newsletter also includes tips to reduce your ecological and carbon footprint when preparing the much-loved summer BBQ and when making travel plans.

I hope you all have a wonderful festive season and look forward to giving you more ideas on how to live green in the coming year.

Michelle

"If you think you are too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room"

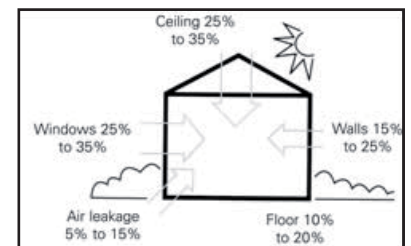
Anita Roddrick

Keeping cool this Summer without warming the planet!

The heat of the Australian Summer can sometimes be unbearable, so we turn on the air conditioner to cool down. But is this keeping us cool or making the planet hotter? Follow these simple steps to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases you produce, while keeping your home cool this summer.

1. The best way to reduce the amount of heat getting into your house from the hot summer sun is **insulation**. A well-insulated home is up to 7°C cooler in summer.

To reduce radiant heat entering your roof cavity, place a reflective layer 25 mm beneath the roof surface. A layer of bulk insulation with an R value (related to thickness) of 3.0 is also recommended for the ceiling, usually between the joists.



2. Install exterior shutters, blinds or awnings on west-facing windows to cut the heat entering from the harsh afternoon sun. This can cut the amount of heat entering your home by 35% and will also help minimise furniture and carpet fading.
3. Close windows, doors, blinds and curtains to keep the heat out on hot days.
4. Keep the area you are cooling to a minimum by closing doors to rooms not frequently used.
5. When using the air conditioner, cool the room to no lower than 24°C and use fans to properly circulate the air.
6. Turn the air conditioner off overnight and when you are out of the house.
7. Remove dust from the air conditioner fan and coils to ensure it is running at its most efficient level.
8. Turn lights off whenever possible, particularly on hot summer nights.
9. When temperatures outside are cooler, open the windows and doors to ventilate the house.



A green Christmas!



Ever thought about the impact Christmas has on our environment? Mountains of presents, decorations galore, cards and wrapping paper, all that food and suburbs of houses covered in Christmas lights. All of these things use a large amount of energy, water and other materials and create a huge amount of waste.

This year we'd like you to consider the planet when you celebrate Christmas, so here are some ideas to help you have a great Christmas that will have less impact on our environment.

Christmas lights are beautiful and have become a fun part of the Christmas festivities, but they can use a lot of energy. This doesn't mean you have to get rid of the Christmas lights, just follow these simple tips to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- When buying new lights, choose energy-efficient models. The new LED lights use 90% less energy than standard Christmas lights.
- Only turn lights on for an hour or two each evening, use a timer so you don't forget.
- Turn off lights, especially interior lights, before you go out or go to sleep. This will also reduce the risk of a fire.
- Use the principle 'less is more' when putting up lights and only put them up for a week or two before Christmas.

Sustainable gifts

Remember the saying "it's the thought that counts". This year think about the planet!

- Purchase gifts from one of the many charitable or environmental organisations on the web.
- Donate to a charity or purchase a gift for someone less fortunate in the recipient's name.
- Fill an old basket or tin with home-made goodies like cakes, biscuits, soap or candles.
- Give some natural beauty products or organic delicacies.
- Frame a piece of your child's artwork.
- Purchase second-hand gifts, like books and antiques.
- Many of the gifts we buy are very resource-intensive, so instead of giving material gifts, give vouchers for a massage or tickets to a concert, the theatre or a sporting event.
- Open a savings account for a young child.
- Give someone the gift of learning - give them cooking, art, photography, music or language lessons.
- Give the gift of your time - create coupons for a massage, spring cleaning, child-minding, manicure, dinner for two etc.
- Be personal and creative - write or illustrate a book, compile a book of childhood memories, make a calendar with pictures of family and interesting places.
- Fill an old suitcase with old clothes, hats and jewellery for your children to play dress-up.





Be waste wise

The shops are full with people buying pressies and planning parties.

What can you do to prevent excess waste over Christmas and during the New Year?

Reduce waste from cards and wrapping:

- Email electronic Christmas cards – saving money, paper and the environment.
- Wrap creatively! Use Christmas stockings, tea towels, old magazines or children’s artwork and give your gift a personal touch.
- Purchase gift bags that can be used many times and reuse old Christmas wrapping paper. And don’t forget to save this year’s as well!

Reduce packaging:

- A large proportion of the waste we generate at Christmas is packaging from the products we buy. Avoid purchasing food that is individually wrapped or products, including presents, with multiple layers of packaging.
- Buy food for your Christmas feast in bulk, and freeze excess for the new year. This will also save you money.

Only buy what you need:

- Although buying in bulk is great to reduce packaging, don’t do it if the food will be wasted. In 2004 Australians threw away \$5.3 billion worth of food.
- Rethink buying cheap trinkets (that will almost certainly be tossed in a cupboard or thrown away). Give a sustainable gift instead.

Choose items that can be reused many times:

- Use reusable utensils, plates, cups and containers instead of disposables.
- Buy Christmas decorations and presents that can be used for years.

Recycle:

- Remember to recycle all bottles, cans, jars and clean paper and cardboard.
- Choose products with recyclable packaging, e.g. paper instead of plastic, plastic bottles and containers numbered 1,2, 3 or 5.
- Take the next step and “close the recycling loop” by buying products from recycled materials, eg. toilet paper and serviettes.

Eco Myth Buster

Myth: There is still debate over whether Climate Change is actually happening.

Fact: Scientific evidence supports the fact that human activities are causing an *enhanced* greenhouse effect, which is leading to global warming, and that we need to **act today** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Travelling these holidays? Tips to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions.

- If possible, catch the train or a bus rather than flying or driving.
- If public transport is not feasible, and you have to drive:
 - Drive efficiently by avoiding stop and start traffic and accelerating and braking smoothly. This will save on petrol and reduce emissions.
 - Make sure your car is serviced and the tyres are kept at the correct air pressure.
 - Remove any unnecessary weight from the car and remove roof racks if not in use.
 - Remember to stop, revive and survive!
- If it's a choice between flying or driving, consider the distance of travel and whether you're travelling alone or with the whole family. Short plane trips can produce more greenhouse gases than driving the distance on your own, and if there are a few of you in the car, driving is much more efficient.
- If you are heading overseas, limit the internal flights you take during your holiday.
- Consider purchasing carbon credits or offsets to make your trip 'carbon neutral'. Go to www.climatefriendly.com, www.carbonplanet.com, www.neco.com.au or shop.easybeinggreen.com.au to purchase carbon credits.



GREEN LIVING NEWS

Would you like to be included on the mailing list? Need to update your address? Do you have a great tip or story you would like to share, or a comment on what should be included in the next newsletter?

Call Council's Environmental Education Officer on 4325 8175 or email: green.living@gosford.nsw.gov.au

Sustainable Summer BBQ-ing

Throwing a steak or some snags on the barbie is a great summer tradition. Here are some BBQ ideas with a sustainable twist.

Meat and animal-based products, particularly red meat, require more land, energy and other resources to produce than plant-based foods. For example, it takes 9 kg of grain to produce 1 kg of beef. You may hear this referred to as the amount of *embodied energy* in a food.

Reducing the amount of meat, eggs and dairy in your diet, even by one or two meals a week can make a big difference, saving water and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. So next time you put on the BBQ, try some of these sustainable alternatives.

- Mushrooms, zucchinis, onions, potatoes or tomatoes stuffed with a variety of veggies, nuts, herbs and spices.
- Veggie kebabs with eggplant, capsicum, mushroom and semi-dried tomatoes. Use some spices to jazz them up.
- Char-grilled asparagus, sweet potato, egg plant or corn on the cob.
- Barbecue vegetable burgers - great for the kids!
 - 750 g potatoes, peeled and 25 g butter
 - 3 tbsp olive oil
 - 1 onion and 1/2 red capsicum, finely diced
 - 1 small carrot and 1 small zucchini, finely diced
 - 3 tbsp chopped fresh herbs
 - Salt and freshly-ground black pepperBoil potatoes until tender, drain, mash and stir in butter. Cook diced vegetables with oil on medium heat until tender. Stir vegetables into mashed potato and then add herbs. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Shape into 10 burgers and cook for about 5 minutes on each side.

