

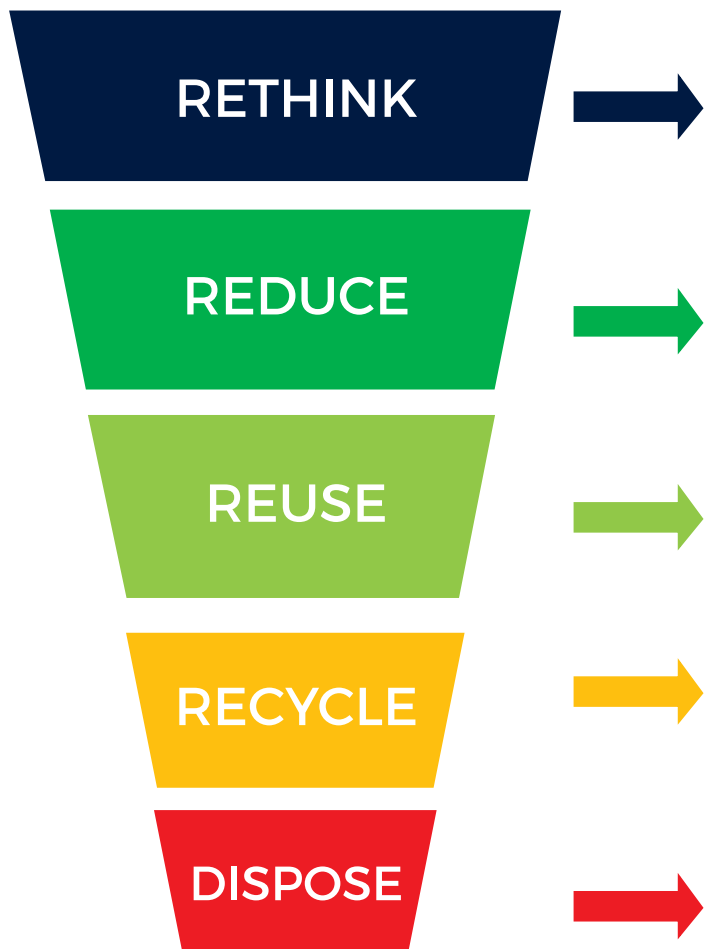
# REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

NSW has a strong focus on waste reduction and sustainability, with a growing movement towards the practice of finding reusable or compostable alternatives to disposable, single-use or plastic items.

Many people have joined the “green movement” and challenged themselves to live a zero waste or low waste lifestyle. This approach aims to prevent waste from being created in the first place, rather than requiring the need for solutions to deal with waste afterwards, effectively stopping waste at the source. If your sink was overflowing, it would make sense to turn off the tap before mopping the floor!

## THE WASTE HIERARCHY

Consider the waste hierarchy, which describes the best ways to manage our waste, from the most to least preferred option.



## HOW CAN I HELP?

Australia is one of the most wasteful countries in the developed world and every year, the waste we generate is growing at twice the rate of our population. Two of our biggest challenges in the household are plastics and organic waste. It only takes 1 minute for Australians to produce 1 tonne of plastic waste and on average, 60% of the general waste sent to landfill is organic material.

You can help by considering the waste hierarchy, which describes the best ways to manage our waste from the most, to least preferred option. By rethinking our approach to waste we can help save resources and reduce our reliance on landfills.

### RETHINK

Ask yourself, do I really need it?

### REDUCE

Aim to reduce the amount you buy or use.

### REUSE

Check if the item can be used again

### RECYCLE

Check if what you're throwing away can be recycled (including via organics recycling or composting)

### DISPOSE

Dispose to landfill only if there is no alternative

# REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

## WASTE REDUCTION

Our general waste (the materials that are sent to landfill) is made up of many different materials, dependent on the structure and habits of the household. To determine where improvements can be made, it may be useful to conduct an audit of household bins. There are various audit templates available, but essentially waste is sorted into recyclable, compostable and disposable categories.

In the average NSW household, around 60% of the general waste bin is food & garden waste. To reduce the amount of food waste that a household sends to landfill, strategies can be used to preserve the freshness of a range of food types and to use up old or less fresh grocery items. Check out the “Avoiding Food Waste” factsheet on the Council website, or visit the EPA’s Love Food, Hate Waste website. This is a useful resource for those wishing to cut down on food waste and save money in the process - because food waste costs us money as well as the valuable resources used in its production, growth and transport!



As an alternative to landfill (where decomposing organic matter produces harmful methane, a greenhouse gas), unavoidable food waste can be diverted via a home compost, worm farm or other domestic system such as a Bokashi bin. These methods also result in valuable fertiliser for the garden.

See the “Composting” and “Worm Farming” factsheets for detailed information on how to set up and maintain these systems.

## CHOOSE REUSABLES

In daily life, we are exposed to a range of disposable options, particularly when it comes to purchasing food and beverages - coffee cups, straws, plastic cutlery, plastic bags, drink cups; the list goes on. These items are designed to be used and discarded immediately after use, and are known as “single-use” items.



Although single-use products are used once and thrown away, they do not disappear - they remain in landfill indefinitely, or even end up as litter. Cutting out our reliance on these single-use items can be as easy as choosing a reusable alternative. The benefits of such swaps are threefold:

- **Cost-effective.** A one-off cost for the reusable item can be quickly made back, for example, bringing your own coffee cup to a café for a discount
- **Functional.** A stainless steel water bottle can keep water cold/hot (as desired) throughout the day, unlike a single-use plastic water bottle
- **Unnecessary waste is avoided!**

Sustainable swaps can be applied across all areas of the home. Visit your local whole food shop or online sustainability stores for inspiration!