

# Living Green on a budget

## WHAT IS A CARBON FOOTPRINT?

A 'Carbon Footprint' is the amount of greenhouse gases that each individual has contributed to the atmosphere due to how we live, such as what we buy and how we travel around. Too many greenhouse gases in the atmosphere changes how our world heats up and cools down, known as 'Climate Change', and can have lots of negative impacts like worsening natural disasters and issues with food production.

## WHY DOES REUSING AND RECYCLING MATTER?

The more an item gets used, the less impact that item has on the environment. Every item that gets made needs energy and resources, and the less energy and resources we use, the smaller our carbon footprint. For example, imagine you pack your lunch in a reusable container instead of a disposable one – both take energy and resources to make, but because the reusable container gets used many times the total energy per use goes down. If we can reuse items, we use less energy ourselves.

When an item can't be reused anymore, that means its time to be recycled. Recycling sends materials back into production to be made into something new instead of being thrown away – this means making the new item will use energy, but it may not need new resources. Not everything can be recycled, so it's good to check before putting it in the recycling bin.

## WHY SHOULD I BORROW INSTEAD OF BUY?

Borrowing instead of buying outright for items you might not need all the time is a great way to reduce your overall carbon footprint, as each item gets a lot more uses before it ends up in landfill. If every person borrows instead of buys it means that less items need to be made.

## HOW DOES 'LIVING GREEN' HELP?

Since every person has their own carbon footprint, we can make our own choices about what we can do to reduce this in a way that works for us.

**We've put together a great list of ways you can live greener below!**



## ELECTRICITY USAGE

The production and use of electricity is one of Australia's main sources of greenhouse emissions. We generate energy mostly through burning non-renewable resources such as coal, gas and petroleum. Greenhouse emissions create air pollution (smog) and trap heat in the atmosphere, leading to climate change. According to the Australian Energy Market Commission, the average Australian household electricity bill is \$1645/year. Reducing electricity usage can have a positive impact on both the environment and your hip pocket.

### Simple actions you can take:

- Laundry – wash clothes on a cold wash and use the clothesline to dry. String up a line in the carport or patio, or use an indoor airing rack when the weather is wet to avoid using a dryer.
- Energy efficient appliances – while a second hand fridge might seem like a bargain, it could be costing you and the planet a lot more. Technology changes rapidly and appliances become more energy efficient each year. When purchasing a new appliance, consider the energy rating as well as the purchase price.
- Heating & cooling – up to 40% of electricity usage goes towards heating and cooling our homes. An air conditioner can use up to 20x more electricity than a ceiling fan which makes it significantly more expensive to run; on the other hand, a small fan heater is cheap to buy but not very efficient to run compared to other heating options. Make sure you're aware of the running cost of the device, but also about how the set temperature impacts your energy usage. Aim for a difference of no more than 8 degrees between the outside temperature and the temperature you set in order to maximise efficiency and reduce the cost to your wallet.
- Phantom energy – up to 10% of the average Australian household electricity bill can be attributed to appliances that are left on standby; by turning off appliances at the wall after use, you can make significant savings.

**For a more tailored approach to reducing your carbon footprint, check out this tool**

**by the Brisbane City Council where you can see exactly what actions to take:**

**<https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/clean-and-green/green-home-and-community/reduce-your-household-carbon-footprint>**

## RECYCLE YOUR CLOTHES - OP SHOPPING/HAND ME DOWNS

Fast fashion damages the environment, exploits workers, and harms animals. Support your local op shop, swap clothes with friends or look for pre-loved clothing online or at markets to save both money and the planet. Every 1kg of clothing that ends up in landfill generates 3-4kg of greenhouse gases; we can reduce this impact by wearing clothing until it wears out and then either using the fabric as rags or dropping it off at a textile recycling collection point.

Other items, including books, toys and homewares are also available from op shops and suitable for handing down or swapping with friends.

## REUSING & REPURPOSING

### Drink bottles

Buying single use water bottles at the supermarket or restaurants is much more expensive than from the tap, and the bottles themselves are not good for the environment in terms of how much energy and resources they need to be made and then used just once. Purchasing a reusable water bottle and filling it up at home or when out and about is a great and easy way to reduce your carbon footprint. The good thing is that tap water in Brisbane and Logan is very safe to drink straight away, but if you like you can also filter it.

### Reusable lunch containers

Like our example earlier, the more times you use a lunch container the smaller your carbon footprint. Did you know that if you go out to eat at a restaurant, you can bring your own container to take home leftovers?

### Gifting

Giving someone a present is such a special way to show you care about them. A way to reduce the carbon footprint of the wrapping is to reuse gift wrap or a gift bag you've been given previously, or to put it in a reusable bag instead that can be used for their weekly shop. The key is to increase just how many times the wrapper gets used before it needs to be recycled or sent to landfill. Can you think of any other creative ways to wrap a present?

### Jars

Jars are an incredibly versatile container that can be used for so many things – storing food in the pantry, fridge or freezer, storing small items around the home, taking to bulk shops and filling it up, using them in crafts... The list could go on and on! The best part is most of the time you can get jars for free when purchasing many different items at the supermarket, so you don't need to spend any further money on it. Glass is also a very recyclable material, so when it is no longer usable you can put it in the recycling bin for a second life.

## REPAIR



### Repair Café

Repair Café is an international organisation with volunteer led branches all over the world, including many in South East QLD. The service is free and will give you some invaluable skills to be able to repair various items around the home. The types of repairs may include sewing, electrical appliances, mechanical appliances, jewellery, or furniture – the best way to find out what they can help with is to contact your local branch directly. Many of the local Repair Cafés have social media, so you'll be able to stay up to date with when their next event is running.

### Brisbane Tool Library

If you're handy with tools, or would like to borrow some camping and outdoors equipment, consider getting a membership with the Brisbane Tool Library. They have a complete inventory of items that can be borrowed online, so you can browse to see if the membership fee will be worthwhile for you before paying.

## ENTERTAINMENT



### Libraries

Brisbane City Council and Logan City Council run many libraries in South East QLD. Memberships are free to those who live within their local area - just make sure you bring along proof of address and photo ID to apply for your library card. You can borrow books, magazines, and DVDs, attend workshops for a variety of ages and interests, and use computers (or WIFI if you have your own device), all for free!

### Parks

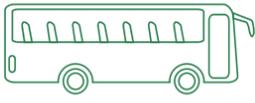
Brisbane and Logan are home to many beautiful parks with exercise equipment, playgrounds and large green spaces perfect to kick a ball around in. Brisbane City Council also runs "Active and Healthy Events" which are often free, though some may have a small cost, which you can find on their website. There is such a wide variety of offerings, including self-defence classes, skateboarding workshops, yoga, dancing, crafts, and even fishing! Have a look on Brisbane City Council's website to see where your local parks are and to explore the activities on offer.

### Toy Library

Kids grow and learn so quickly, and toys are a great way to encourage them to play and develop into clever, well rounded human beings. Unfortunately with how quick they grow, expensive toys can be outgrown in a matter of months – if they are thrown away, it takes much longer than that to break down in landfill! Toy Libraries are a great way to get access to toys without needing to purchase, and a sneaky bonus is that your home won't be filled to the brim with unplayed toys just sitting in storage. Have a look online to see where your closest Toy Library is located and information around their membership fees.

LET'S CREATE A  
BETTER WORLD

## TRANSPORT



After housing and food, a priority for many household budgets is transport. Owning a car is convenient, but very expensive. In addition to the high cost of fuel, you also need to pay for registration and maintenance, and possibly insurance and parking. These costs easily add up to \$100/week. If you can avoid owning a car, you will save money and reduce the amount of pollution you're sending into the atmosphere.

### Simple actions you can take:

- Active Transport - Use active transport (walking, cycling, scootering) to travel around your neighbourhood, to schools, shops and local entertainment. This costs next to nothing, is good for your health and does not pollute the environment.
- Public Transport - Using public transport regularly is much cheaper than owning a car. Make sure you purchase concession tickets if you're eligible, and GoCards are cheaper than purchasing single tickets. If you already own a car, it might still be cheaper to use public transport occasionally, especially when heading to destinations that charge for parking. You can combine active transport with public transport to travel longer distances.
- Car Pooling - If you're heading in the same direction as a friend, neighbour, colleague or family member, consider car-pooling. By sharing the trip you reduce congestion on the road, share the cost and have the opportunity to chat while commuting.

## PACKAGING



Have you noticed how much plastic packaging is on supermarket shelves? Sadly, much of this plastic ends up in the environment, harming animals and polluting waterways. To reduce the amount of packaging you bring home from the shops, buy in bulk. Instead of buying snack-sized packets of chips, buy a big bag and divide into smaller reusable containers; buy juice and soft drinks in larger bottles to pour into cups or smaller reusable bottles. You can apply this to other supermarket staples like toilet paper, snacks, and more to reduce the packaging you're sending into the waste stream. To make sure you're getting the most bang for your buck, check out the cost per gram instead of cost per packet. Just make sure to check the use by date to avoid waste!

## GARDENING



It's no secret that the price of fruit and vegetables are increasing. On top of that, mass produced fruit and veg can also negatively impact the environment through the amount of energy required to store and transport it, and greenhouse gases created by the large amounts of food waste generated by the industry. By getting out into your own garden, or hiring a plot in a community garden, you're able to grow your own seasonal produce which can reduce how much you need to spend on groceries. Some fruits and vegetables can even be grown from scraps, further reducing the cost of setting up your own veggie garden.

Community gardens are a great local resource to help with gardening. They often host free or low cost workshops where you can build on your skills in growing food, maintaining a home compost and heaps more. You can generally also find composting hubs there where you can drop off kitchen waste if you can't have a compost bin at home, which is another great way to reduce your carbon footprint.

## RECYCLING



Recycling materials is a great way for resources to be recovered instead of ending up in landfill, and the best part? There are so many free ways to recycle a variety of different items! It would take a week to list all of the different options, so instead visit <https://recyclingnearyou.com.au> where you can search by item and postcode to find out what you can recycle and where.

### Specialty Recycling

It is likely that your local shopping centre has a drop off point for at least 1 recyclable material that can't go in your yellow-top bin at home – soft plastics, batteries, pens, textiles, sports shoes, toothbrushes and cosmetics packaging can all be recycled if you drop them off in the right place.

### Containers for Change

One way to make some money back is to use the Containers for Change scheme in QLD, where you can get paid 10c per eligible container for recycling. There are a variety of different ways that you can exchange the containers, so look online for more information.

**We hope these tips help you make choices that are healthier for both your wallet and the world.**

### Further reading:

[https://www.sparkpeople.com/blog/blog.asp?post=15\\_easy\\_ways\\_to\\_go\\_green\\_on\\_the\\_cheap](https://www.sparkpeople.com/blog/blog.asp?post=15_easy_ways_to_go_green_on_the_cheap)

<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/how-go-green-budget-actually-save-more-money-ncna999636>

<https://www.frugalandthriving.com.au/sustainable-living-budget/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/everyday/growing-new-veggies-from-scraps/12128496>

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Information in this sheet has been collated by Kyabra Community Association in October 2022. Kyabra is not affiliated with any of the websites or organisations referenced throughout the sheet. We have included details based on recommendations from staff and community members.

  
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