

## Hints & Tips to Get You Started

Choose one or more areas you'd like to start working on in your business:

[Saving on electricity costs](#) – simple actions to use energy more efficiently

[Reducing waste disposal costs](#) – practical steps to make less waste

[Saving water, saving money](#) – basic steps to reduce water use

[Efficient transport](#) – getting your staff from A to B with the least cost to the business and the environment

*Not every action listed will be feasible and worth taking in your particular business, but **all businesses** can benefit by taking up at least some of the suggestions.*

*Or if you are already doing these things and need more tips try Sustainability Victoria's Save Yourself Tips <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/save-yourself-tips.doc>*

*EPA Victoria also has guidelines available on their website to help industry improve their resource efficiency. [http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/bus/resource\\_efficiency/default.asp](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/bus/resource_efficiency/default.asp)*



## Saving on energy

### Simple actions to use energy more efficiently

**Lighting** – *If you invest in more efficient lighting, you can typically expect to break even within 3 years or less.*

- Replace standard light globes with energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs.
- Replace overhead lights with fluorescent tubes – these cost more to install, but last about 10 times longer than standard lamps and are 70% more efficient. If you schedule replacement of fluorescent tubes before they wear out, you can maximise efficiency.
- Make sure lights are turned off when not in use (e.g. if leaving the room for more than 5 minutes if using standard light globes). Put up signs on all exit doors reminding staff to switch off lights before leaving.

Install technology to ensure lights are off when not needed, e.g. timed switches, programmable lighting controllers, automatic switches that respond to light sensors or movement sensors, locked switches for areas that rarely require lighting during normal working hours (subject to safety considerations and special needs).

**Office equipment** – *Offices are typically used for only a third of the total hours in a week, so avoiding unnecessary energy use during unoccupied periods will enable significant cost savings.*

- Set computer monitors to switch off after a period of inactivity instead of switching to screen-saver mode.
- Check that photocopiers are set up for optimal energy efficiency and use 'energy saver' or standby mode when not in use.
- If you are replacing any equipment or hardware, choose options with energy-saving features e.g. sleep mode, high star rating.
- Use plug-in timers on any equipment that will use energy when left on unnecessarily.
- Instead of using the remote control, turn off media equipment (e.g. DVD players, VCRs, TVs) at the switch, or the outlet, when not in use – standby mode wastes energy.
- At the end of each working day, switch off all computers, printers and other equipment.
- Make a clear checklist of equipment to be turned off during holiday periods, e.g. printers, copiers, air conditioners, computers, lights, water chilling or heating units, chargers and any equipment in standby mode. (Equipment to leave on would include security and fire alarm systems, exit and emergency lighting, servers, PABX machines)



**Air conditioning** – *When used inefficiently, air conditioning can be a significant drain on your energy budget. A few simple habits can keep staff comfortable without wasting money.*

- Use zone function on air conditioners to avoid heating or cooling rooms not in use. Close off unused rooms where zone function is not available e.g. within zones.
- Regularly adjust the thermostat to avoid cooling or heating more than necessary for the season and climate (e.g. 18°C in winter and 23°C in summer) – programmable thermostats can help you save around one-fifth of heating and cooling costs. Use fresh air whenever this will help adjust the room temperature more efficiently than the air conditioner.
- Run air conditioning only for the optimal period to suit your staff's use of the building.
- Seal off any areas that don't need to be heated or cooled, e.g. toilets, storage rooms and passageways.
- In factories and warehouses, fit large doors with seals to prevent heat loss in winter or unwanted hot air from outdoors in summer.
- Cut down the amount of cooling you need by installing blinds or shading to prevent direct sunlight over-heating rooms in summer.

## Services to help you use energy more efficiently

Some energy retailers provide advice to businesses on how to reduce their gas and electricity consumption and manage Greenhouse emissions. Find out if your retailer provides this on their website.

### AGL

[www.agl.com.au](http://www.agl.com.au)

### Country Energy

[www.countryenergy.com.au](http://www.countryenergy.com.au)

### Energy Australia

[www.energy.com.au](http://www.energy.com.au)

### JackGreen

[www.jackgreen.com.au](http://www.jackgreen.com.au)

### Momentum Energy

[www.momentumenergy.com.au](http://www.momentumenergy.com.au)

### Origin Energy

[www.originenergy.com.au](http://www.originenergy.com.au)

### Powerdirect

[www.powerdirect.com.au](http://www.powerdirect.com.au)

### Red Energy

[www.redenergy.com.au](http://www.redenergy.com.au)

### TRUenergy

[www.truenergy.com.au](http://www.truenergy.com.au)

### Victoria Electricity

[www.victoriaelectricity.com.au](http://www.victoriaelectricity.com.au)



## Reducing waste disposal costs

### Practical steps to make less waste

**Paper** – *Printing is only for permanent documents! Anyone can learn to give up the habit of printing unnecessarily.*

- Set up a system to ensure all e-mails are automatically saved and stored where they can be retrieved.
- Receive and send faxes direct from a computer via a fax modem.
- Print or photocopy on both sides of paper whenever possible, and print two pages to a sheet where feasible.
- Edit all documents onscreen before printing – it just takes practice.
- Don't hand out printed notes at presentations unless absolutely necessary – use a digital slide show instead and offer electronic copies to be sent by e-mail as requested.
- Recycle paper from paper shredders.
- Use electronic methods for all routine administrative procedures: e-mail payslips and superannuation notifications, online rosters and timesheets, computer-based filing systems, memos.
- Purchase materials, office consumables etc online and don't accept printed catalogues.

### Packaging and plastic

- When packaging sending fragile items for delivery, using soluble rice-chips instead of polystyrene flakes or bubble wrap as filler.
- Avoid buying products with excessive packaging (and use suppliers that avoid unnecessary disposable packaging).
- If your business sends mass mail-outs, regularly update your address list to minimise the proportion returned to sender.
- When it's necessary to save data or documents to CD, use rewritable CDs or multiple sessions per disk, so you have fewer used CDs to discard.
- If you use acetate for overhead presentations, use non-permanent markers and re-use.



## Recycling

- Label recycling and waste bins clearly so that all staff and visitors will understand, even if English is not their first language. *You can print out signs for all of your bins from the Sustainability Victorian website [here](#)*
- Put recycling containers in the workplace kitchen or lunch room, so people can recycle like they do at home.
- Wash and re-use takeaway containers in the kitchen or workplace until worn out, then recycle if recyclable plastic.

## Waste disposal around the office

- Instruct cleaners to empty individual waste bins only once each week. This helps staff learn how much waste they generate as well as reducing cleaning costs.
- Instruct cleaners not to empty waste bins if recyclable items have been put in them. (Include organic waste if you have set up a composting system.)
- Engage a contractor to collect cardboard separately for recycling. This can be significantly cheaper than landfill pickup costs.

## Computers and equipment

- When discarding unusable computers and monitors, use a recycling service to salvage components and avoid sending hazardous waste (e.g. heavy metals, plastics that degrade to toxic products) to landfill. The [Byteback recycling service](#) is available for small businesses.
- Use refilled or remanufactured toner cartridges (where recommended) which can save up to half the cost of new cartridges. Or buy new cartridges but donate all spent cartridges to recycling schemes.



## Food and drink

- Ban disposable cups and plates and replace with reusable crockery.
- Don't let compost-able waste go into landfill (via ordinary garbage). Set up a compost bin (for plant matter), worm farm (for food scraps) or green waste bin in the lunch room or kitchen. Use the soil output in the garden (the workplace's or a staff member's) or donate to a local community garden (check with your council).
- If your business generates a large volume of organic waste (e.g. food or plant matter) try to make a deal with a worm farm or horticulture business to remove or receive compost-able waste.

## Services to help you reduce your waste and improve you recycling

### Sustainability Victoria – Search for a Recycler

Search for a recycling service by category (for example batteries or scrap metal), or product (e.g. furniture or glass) or company name.

<http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/1676-recycling-services-in-victoria.asp>

### Waste Exchange Database

Developed by EPA and the [Victorian Waste Management Association \(VWMA\)](#), the Waste Exchange Database brings together waste generators and potential waste receivers to find reuse or recycling options for wastes that would otherwise be disposed to landfill. You can browse the database for wastes that are wanted or available for reuse or recycling or simply register on-line to place a free advertisement.

<http://www.wasteexchange.net.au/index.asp>

### Regional Waste Management Groups

Regional Waste Management Groups are responsible for planning the management of municipal solid waste in Victoria. There are 16 regions in Victoria. Contact your Regional Waste Management Group for information about Waste Reduction strategies and plans in your region.

<http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/402-find-your-regional-waste-management-group.asp?intSiteID=4>



## Saving water, saving money

### Basic steps to reduce water use

#### Toilets and lunch room

- Encourage all staff to report leaking taps and fix promptly.
- Install dual-flush toilets if possible.
- Run the lunchroom dishwasher only when full, and avoid unnecessary rinsing.

#### Cleaning and running water use

- Use a broom and mop to clean floors (e.g. in cafes, kitchens, shops), not a hose.
- If your business needs to use running water from a hose (e.g. to clean surfaces, containers or products, to cool equipment, to lubricate conveyer belts), research the most efficient spray nozzle for your purpose (you may need technical help with this) – the right spray or jet technology could achieve significant savings.

**Showers** – *Whether you provide showers for staff or work in the hospitality industry, these are a good target for saving water.*

- Install efficient shower heads and taps or flow control for existing fittings.
- Minimise the water that is wasted while users wait for the shower to heat up by insulating hot water pipes and minimising the distance between hot water cylinders and taps.
- When fitting new bathrooms, choose plumbing fixtures with the highest water efficiency rating, e.g. 4.5/3 dual flush toilets, triple A (AAA) infrared urinal flushes.

#### Food preparation

- If you use a sink for washing up, switch to a water-efficient (AAA rated) dishwasher and use only when fully loaded – efficient dishwashers use significantly less water than a typical commercial sink.
- Don't use running water to wash vegetables etc. Use a basin and refill/rinse as necessary.



## Services to help you reduce your water consumption and save money.

Save Water <http://www.savewater.com.au/>

Products, services, programs, case studies and tips to help you save water in your business. Also access the savewater!® efficiency service here.

### Water Authorities

Your water authority may be able to provide advice to your business on how to reduce water consumption. Find out if your retailer provides this on their website. Find you local water authority [here](#).

City West Water (<http://www.citywestwater.com.au/>) and Goulburn Valley Water (<http://www.gvwater.vic.gov.au/>) are working with Grow Me The Money to deliver water savings and efficiencies to businesses registered with the program.

City West Water has recently launched the Water Conservation Solutions program which is a great example of the sorts of programs water authorities are implementing to help businesses save water, and save money.

### Water Conservation Solutions Program

The Water Conservation Solutions program is designed to help our major commercial and institutional customers save water, cut costs and improve the sustainability of your business through the development of a City West WaterMAP™. The City West WaterMAP™ is an action plan outlining how and where water efficiency can be improved.

Program benefits may include:

- Improved bottom line
- Reduced water consumption costs
- Reduced sewage discharge costs
- Reduced water and wastewater treatment costs
- Assistance to gain funding to investigate and carry out water efficiency measures
- Reduced energy costs and greenhouse emissions
- Other advantages
- Improved company reputation by reducing the impact of your business on the environment
- A choice of knowledgeable service providers to help deliver program initiatives



- Behavioural change of staff and general users, leading to a further commitment to reduce water consumption
- A better understanding of how water is used within your business
- Efficient transport

## Efficient transport

**Getting your staff from A to B with the least cost to the business and the environment – *A few simple habits can save fuel costs.***

- Ensure cars are tuned and serviced regularly.
- Make sure tyres are inflated to the correct pressure – under-inflated tyres increase fuel consumption unnecessarily.
- Lighten the load on the engine – don't store heavy equipment in the car that is not needed every day.
- When filling up at the fuel pump, don't keep filling after the nozzle automatically cuts out – over-filled tanks lose fuel via the overflow pipe.
- Use the air conditioner only when necessary – it can use up to 10% more fuel than needed for driving.
- Allow staff to avoid peak-hour driving through staggered or flexible work hours where possible.
- Set up a car pool or offer public transport passes instead of car use.

