

# Sustainable Business Program

## Sustainable Procurement

### What is sustainable procurement?

- A sustainable product is a **good or service that minimises its impact on the environment at each phase of its life cycle.**
- Purchasing decisions should consider **environmental impacts** associated with the purchase of:
  - **Building materials**, insulation, lighting and paint.
  - **Furnishings such as furniture**, flooring, doors.
  - **Fixtures and fittings** such as toilets, urinals, taps and showers.
  - **Business equipment and appliances** such as air conditioner, fridge, washing machine, dishwasher.
  - **Business stationary and materials** including paper, glues and correction fluid, toner and printer cartridges.
  - **Catering equipment** such as plates, cups, crockery.
  - **Food and beverages** such as teas and coffee.
  - **Cleaning products** such as detergents and air fresheners.
  - **Packaging**, such as shopping bags or food containers.
  - Any activities or services carried out by **contractors** such as maintenance and cleaning.

### Benefits for your business

Sustainable products represent value for money in real dollar terms when life-cycle costs are considered, such as:

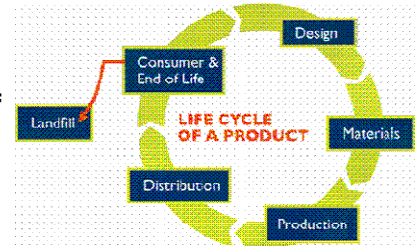
- **Reducing running costs** through using less energy and water and producing less waste
- **Reducing waste disposal costs** through generating less waste during operation
- Buying more **durable longer lasting equipment that requires less maintenance delays the purchase of expensive new equipment** (maintenance and replacement costs)
- Products with the capacity to be **upgraded, reused, resold or recycled** at the end-of-life reduces replacement and disposal costs.
- Buying products that are **natural and safer to use**, e.g. less toxic chemicals reduces OHS costs and improves productivity
- Improved **public reputation**
- Improved **staff moral**

### How does it work?

- Purchasing is about **choice** - buying products and services which best fit the purpose for which they are intended.
- Environmentally aware purchasing goes further by considering the environmental impacts associated with a product throughout its **life cycle.**

### Life Cycle

- The life cycle of a product is the **series of stages** every product goes through. These stages include material extraction and processing, manufacturing, packaging and distribution, product use, recycling and final disposal of the product.
- At all stages in the life cycle, the environment can be affected. All environmental impacts of a given product can be traced back to the **resources** that go into the product (energy, raw materials, water and land) and the **waste** generated (emissions to air, water and land) at each stage in the life cycle.



### Examples of sustainable products

- Items made from **recycled materials**:
  - Writing paper (100% recycled content ideally)
  - Stationary such as envelopes etc.
  - Recycled/ remanufactured toner cartridges
  - Toilet paper
  - Plastic furniture
  - Timber products
- Items that have a good **environmental performance**:
  - Energy saving light bulbs (compact fluorescents)
  - Biodeisel for cars
  - Hybrid cars
- Appliances with high **energy rating** (high number of stars):
  - Fridges and freezers
  - Dryers
  - TV's and DVD's
  - Other electrical items
- Appliances with a high **water rating** (WELS high number of stars):
  - Washing machines or dishwashers
  - Showerheads
  - Toilets and urinals
- Items that are **easier to dispose** of at the end of their lifetime.



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- Items with reduced or no **toxic chemicals**:
  - Natural cleaning products
  - Natural Paints with no VOC's
- Items that are durable and have a **long lifespan**.
- Items which **you can reuse again**:
  - Reusable shopping bags instead of plastic
  - Reusable batteries
  - Reusable containers (jam jars)
  - Reusable plates and cups as opposed to disposables
  - Serviettes and linen as opposed to disposables
- **Second hand** items you can give a new lease of life:
  - Furniture
  - Clothing
  - Cars
  - Electrical items

## Action plan for sustainable purchasing

Ask the following series of questions when making purchasing decisions:

- **What is it made from?** Choose products made from recycled materials as these have usually minimised their impact at this stage of the life cycle. It is also a good idea to avoid products made from hazardous materials.
- **How was it produced?** We can choose products from manufacturers that have tried to improve the production process to use less energy, materials and water, or create less waste.
- **How is it packaged?** Choose products with the least packaging or packaging that can be reused or recycled.
- **Where was it produced?** Choose products that are locally made or Australian-made. Products made locally will usually have the lowest transport impact as the further a product is transported, the more fuel is used. Buying locally also supports local retailers.
- **How efficiently does it work?** Choose products that are energy efficient. Products that have energy rating systems include whitegoods, appliances that use gas and water, and cars.
- **Can it be repaired?** Choose products that are long-lasting and easy to repair.
- **How will it be disposed of?** Before buying a product, we need to think about how it will eventually be disposed of. Ask ourselves whether the product is really at the end of its life? Can the product be remanufactured? If it can't be reused, can it be recycled? Throwing out products add to the amount of waste going to the tip and can be a huge waste of valuable materials and resources.

## Contractors

- Contractors plays an **important** part in the delivery of a business' services.
- It is **your responsibility** to ensure that this is carried out efficiently and without environmental risk.
- You should ensure that contractors **operate in an environmentally-responsible manner** and that they

are aware of the your company's **environmental policy** and understand the various environmental implications associated with different types of activities.

- Contractors with an **established environmental policy** and a proven track record on environmental performance are generally more likely to take impacts into account in project management.
- When preparing documentation for a new contract, clauses should be included which **stipulate environmental controls and performance**.
- One way to assess your contractor's commitment to environmental protection is to carry out regular **supplier auditing**.

## Where to find sustainable products and services

**Australian Green Procurement Database** [www.greenprocurement.org](http://www.greenprocurement.org)  
**Biome** [www.biome.com.au](http://www.biome.com.au)  
**Construction Connect** [www.constructionconnect.com.au](http://www.constructionconnect.com.au)  
**Earth Basics** [www.earthbasics.com.au](http://www.earthbasics.com.au)  
**Ebay** [www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au)  
**Eco-Shop** [www.ecoshop.com.au/asp/default.asp](http://www.ecoshop.com.au/asp/default.asp)  
**Enviro and Eco Directory** [www.enviro.org.au/EnviroDir-australia.asp](http://www.enviro.org.au/EnviroDir-australia.asp)  
**Freecycle** [www.freecycle.org.au](http://www.freecycle.org.au)  
**Good Environmental Choice Australia—Products Register** [www.aela.org.au/productsregister.htm](http://www.aela.org.au/productsregister.htm)  
**Greenpower** [www.greenpower.gov.au](http://www.greenpower.gov.au)  
**Heritage Building Centre** [www.shbc.com.au/contact.htm](http://www.shbc.com.au/contact.htm)  
**LGSA Sustainable Choice Local Government Purchasing for Sustainability** [www.lgsa-plus.net.au/www/html/956-sustainable-choice.asp](http://www.lgsa-plus.net.au/www/html/956-sustainable-choice.asp)  
**Neco** [www.neco.com.au](http://www.neco.com.au)  
**Planet Ark** [www.planetarkdirect.com](http://www.planetarkdirect.com)  
**Sustainable Living Directory** [www.slf.org.au/directory](http://www.slf.org.au/directory)  
**The Green Directory** [www.thegreendirectory.com.au](http://www.thegreendirectory.com.au)  
**Todae** [www.healthyhabitat.com.au/store/comersus\\_index.asp](http://www.healthyhabitat.com.au/store/comersus_index.asp)

## Further information

**Australian Building Greenhouse Rating scheme** [www.abgr.com.au](http://www.abgr.com.au)  
**Australian Green Procurement** [www.geca.org.au/green-procurement/home-2004sogp.htm](http://www.geca.org.au/green-procurement/home-2004sogp.htm)  
**Buy Recycled Business Alliance** [www.brba.com.au](http://www.brba.com.au)  
**NSW Govt Sustainable Procurement Program** [www.greengoods.nsw.gov.au](http://www.greengoods.nsw.gov.au)  
**Choice Magazine** [www.choice.com.au](http://www.choice.com.au)  
**DEUS**—[www.deus.nsw.gov.au/business\\_industry.asp](http://www.deus.nsw.gov.au/business_industry.asp)  
**ECO-Buy** [www.ecobuy.org.au](http://www.ecobuy.org.au)  
**EPA—Small business** [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/small\\_business/index.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/small_business/index.htm)  
**Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy** [www.wrapp.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wrapp.nsw.gov.au)  
**Water Services Association of Australia** [www.wsaa.asn.au](http://www.wsaa.asn.au)  
**Work Energy Smart** [www.energysmart.com.au/wes](http://www.energysmart.com.au/wes)

**For further advice on how your business can save money and save the environment please contact The Watershed Business Liaison Officer and receive a free consultation. Simply visit The Watershed at 218 King Street, Newtown, or phone 9519 6366 or email [watershedbiz@marrickville.nsw.gov.au](mailto:watershedbiz@marrickville.nsw.gov.au).**

## Reference

*Planet Ark Environmental Foundation (2005) 10 Years of Recycling: The Good, the Bad & the Ugly, Planet Ark, Sydney*



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