

WASTE HIERARCHY

Australians throw away over 18 million tonnes of waste each year, much of which contains valuable resources that are lost in landfill. This could be considerably reduced through careful purchasing and thinking of our waste as a resource.

The Waste Hierarchy was developed to help everyone in the community to manage waste so that less waste is produced, and more is reused and recycled.

Avoidance is the highest level of the hierarchy, as it asks the entire community to reduce the amount of waste created and to use resources more efficiently.

Resource Recovery is about ensuring that the community does everything it can to reuse, reprocess and recycle products, so that resources are used efficiently.

Disposal is called an end-of-pipe solution or the last option. Once a product or material can't be used anymore then it should be disposed of so that any environmental harm is minimised.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Avoid creating waste – reduce the amount of waste you produce at home, school or work. Be a 'smart shopper' and reduce your waste – or you'll only have to find a way to dispose of it later.

Make sure you **reuse** and **recycle**. This way you'll be helping to maximise the use of our precious natural resources. Reuse containers and bottles, hire videos and tools and borrow books from the library and shop

at second hand or charity stores. Check with your local council to see which items can be recycled in your area. Buy recycled products or ones that have recycled content, such as recycled paper.

Before you **dispose** of anything to landfill (or your own garbage bin), ask yourself 'Can I use this again?', and 'Will someone else be able to use this?'

MORE INFORMATION

- www.resource.nsw.gov.au – information about waste avoidance
- www.wastecom.sa.gov.au/wmc/FactSheets/hierarch.html - 'The Solid Waste Management Hierarchy'
- your local council Waste or Environmental Education Officer