



## FOOD WASTE

In 2004, Australians threw away a total of \$5.3 billion on all forms of food. This statistic includes:

- \$2.9 billion worth of fresh food
- \$630 million worth of uneaten take-away food
- \$876 million in leftovers
- \$596 million of unfinished drinks and
- \$241 million of frozen food

In the average South Australian household, 40% of the waste is food waste. Around 48% of landfill in South Australia is taken up with food and garden waste. (Wasteful Consumption in Australia, a report published by The Australia Institute in March 2005.) This list does not include food discarded by retailers. There is very little food waste which needs to go to into the rubbish bin and be taken to landfill. Throwing food away costs more than just the money you paid for it, you're also wasting all the water, energy and other resources that went in to producing the food in the first place.

### Things you can do

- Think about what you need and use what's in the fridge, freezer or pantry before you eat out or get take away
- Shop with a list
- Purchase only enough food to use within its shelf life
- Prepare enough but not too much food at each meal
- Learn methods for making use of leftovers
- Fruit and vegetable waste can be composted or go into a worm farm
- Meat waste can be buried in the garden
- A range of methods for preserving seasonal surplus of fruit and vegetables is available. A separate Fact Sheet on Food Preservation is on the Sustainable Communities website
- For your surplus harvest consider donating to [Community Food SA Inc.](#) 5/576 Main North Road, Gepps Cross SA 5094, tel. 8262 734

## Composting

Composting breaks down organic material which is then suitable to use as fertiliser. You can put in your compost:

- Vegetable and fruit scraps
- Fallen leaves and fruit
- Tea leaves, tea bags and coffee grounds
- Vacuum cleaner dust
- Egg shells
- Old newspapers (shredded)
- Lawn clippings
- Sawdust, and small amounts of wood ash or lime
- Tissues

Materials not suitable for composting include:

- Meat, fish and dairy products (these can be buried in the garden)
- Large branches and hard plant stems (they won't break down)
- Timber products treated with chemicals
- Magazines
- Diseased plants
- Weeds with bulbs or underground storage parts
- Large amounts of bread or cake (they attract vermin)
- Plastics
- Bones

An alternative composting method is the **Bokashi** bucket in which food waste is fermented by microbes producing compost and liquid fertiliser. A Bokashi bucket has a firm lid and is suitable to be kept indoors. The Bokashi system can deal with almost all food waste which is layered with fermenting granules manufactured commercially. The liquid is drawn off periodically and the solid contents emptied into the garden.

Bokashi buckets and granules can be purchased in Adelaide from member shop Ecolateral, 411 Magill Road, St Morris and from Hunter Gatherer Designs, tel. 8344 4966; [www.jakibokashi.com.au](http://www.jakibokashi.com.au)