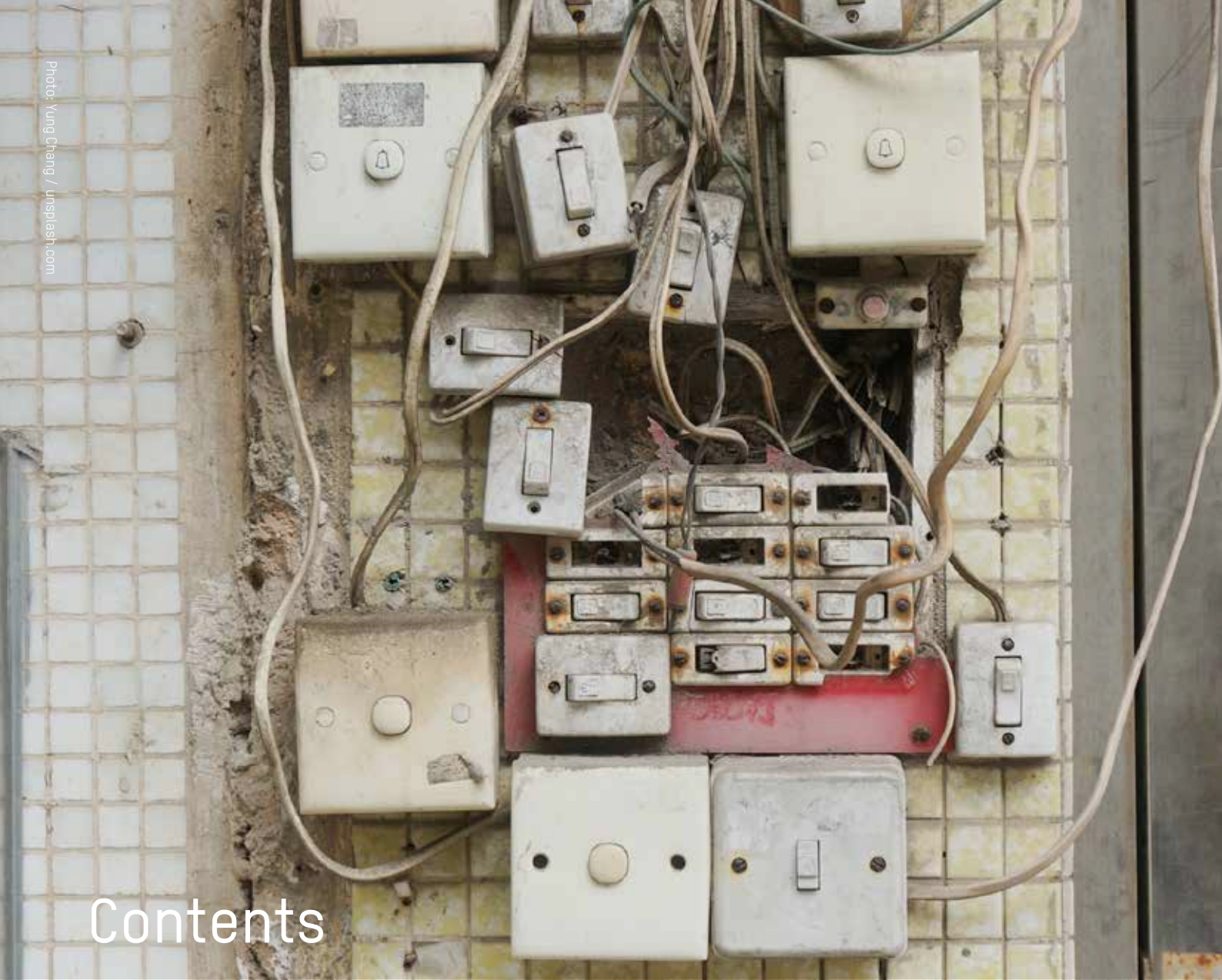


RESPONSIBLE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Learn how to minimise waste and maximise efficiency to make smart use of energy in your home.





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1. Why should I save resources?

We are lucky to live in a country that is rich in resources. Australia has plenty of food to eat, and enough electricity and water to meet our daily needs. But we should not be wasteful or excessive when we use energy resources – we should save resources whenever possible.

Why use food, water and electricity with respect?

Here are two good reasons:

- **Environmental cost:** Food, water and energy are limited resources that we grow or extract from our natural environment. When we use these resources wisely, we minimise our impact on the environment.
- **Economic reasons:** Responsible consumption is smart because it helps us save money; the less energy you use, the less money you spend. Australia's residential electricity prices are some of the highest in the world, so it certainly pays to use electricity sparingly.

How many resources can we save at home?

You can save energy resources at home without giving up all of your creature comforts. Most of us have a few bad habits that waste energy. It's amazing how much energy – and money – you can save by changing those old habits.

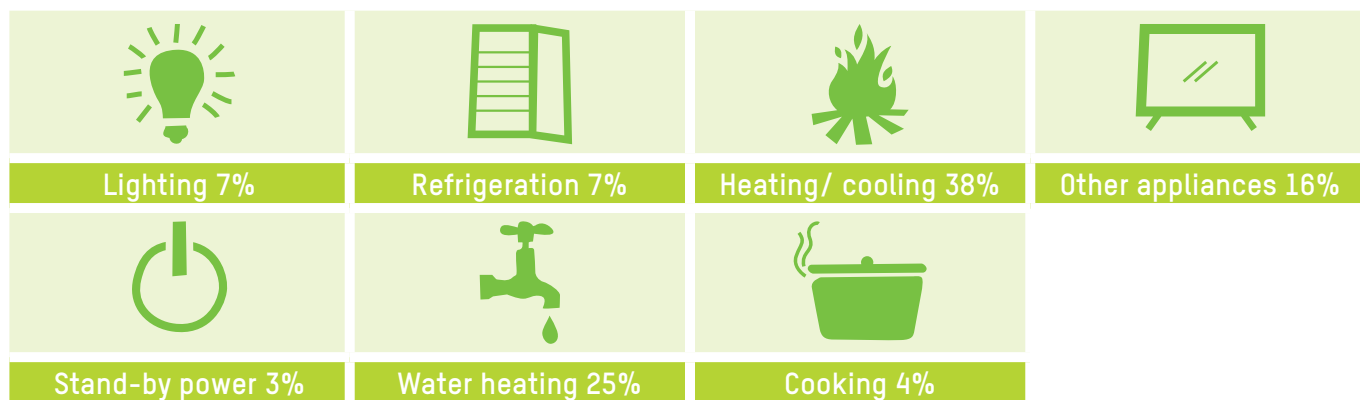
Do you turn off the shower when you soap up? Do you open the blinds during the day to heat up the house? Are the bedrooms well insulated? Do you store food in sealed containers to make it last? Do you unplug electrical equipment when you're not using it? There are so many simple things you can do to reduce your energy consumption. If you change these habits, you can significantly reduce your electricity, water and food consumption.

In this eBook, you will discover lots of good practices to help you be more energy efficient, using only those resources that you really need.



To begin, see how domestic electricity consumption is roughly broken down in this chart based on the 2008 Baseline Energy Estimates from the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

Breakdown of domestic consumption



Cutting down energy usage is the best way to minimise your energy bills. [This site](#) explains how to measure your current energy use and then take steps to reduce it.

Food waste is also a big problem in Australia. Every year, we throw away about four million tonnes of food, worth up to \$10 billion – what a waste! Follow the advice in this eBook to reduce the amount of food that your family throws away.

2. Handy tips to save resources at home

Kitchen

- **Don't cook too much food:** Excess food often ends up in the fridge, where you will forget about it.
- **Store fruit and vegetables separately:** As fruit ripens, it releases gas that makes vegetables go off.
- **Keep fish and meat icy cold:** Keep meat and fish in the coldest section of your fridge (near the freezer compartment). Freeze whatever you don't use.
- **Plan meals to avoid buying too much:** If you have leftovers, use them in the next meal, or make shakes or soups with overripe fruit and vegetables.
- **Don't put warm food in the fridge:** Hot food makes the fridge work harder than usual to cool it down.

Laundry

- **Avoid using the tumble dryer:** Wet laundry dries quickly in the Australian climate. Rather than machine dry all your laundry, hang it outside or use an indoor drying rack. Your clothes will last longer and you'll use much less electricity – win-win!
- **Use shorter laundry cycles:** Tailor washing cycles to suit your needs. Most clothes – except for small children's clothing – aren't heavily stained, so you can use shorter cycles that consume less water to get the same results.

Living room

- **Draught-proof the front door and windows:** Heat often escapes from the gaps at the bottom of doors and around windows. Install self-adhesive rubber or silicone strips to eliminate draughts in your home. They are available from most hardware stores.
- **Use efficient light bulbs:** We spend lots of time in our living rooms so we can save money and energy with LED light bulbs. These LEDs have longer lives than incandescent bulbs and use less electricity; they use 10w compared to the 60w consumed by a standard bulb. While incandescent bulbs last up to 1,000 hours, an LED will go for up to 40,000 hours.
- **Use ambient lighting:** When watching television or reading, you don't need to light up the whole room. Use small lamps or candles.
- **Set the temperature of your heating and air-conditioning:** You will save energy if the temperature in your home is from 24° to 26° in summer and 19° to 21° in winter.



Photo: Nathan Fertig / unsplash.com

Bedroom

- **Use carpets in winter:** Insulate your home from the cold with carpets, rugs and wall-hangings.
- **Don't heat rooms that aren't in use:** Turn off the heat in empty rooms to avoid wasting energy.
- **Make the most of daylight:** Open the blinds during the day to let your house warm up naturally while you are out at work. Close them when it gets dark to retain the heat.
- **Don't obstruct the radiator:** When you hang clothes on your radiator or place furniture in front of it, it will take longer to heat up, and the heat won't spread evenly around the house.
- **Harvest your own energy while out running:** Companies like **nPower** are experimenting with personal energy-generating technology, so you can charge your smart phone and devices with energy generated by your own movement.

Bathroom

- **Disconnect equipment when not in use:** Many of us leave appliances plugged in all day. If we don't completely unplug them, they stay in standby mode and continue to consume energy. To save you from constant unplugging, you can use standby eliminators, which are extension sockets that turn off your equipment directly.
- **Put a plastic bottle inside your cistern to reduce its capacity:** If you have an old cistern with no flush limiter, you will save as much water as the volume of the bottle. So, if your cistern has a six-litre capacity and you put a two-litre bottle inside, you'll save two litres of water every time you flush. Multiply this by the number of times you use the toilet in a year to calculate your annual water savings — the savings are huge.
- **Use your toilet's half flush option:** Only use full flush if absolutely necessary — it uses twice as much water!
- **Set your hot water boiler at a moderate temperature:** The ideal heat for showering and



washing dishes is 40° Centigrade; it's not so hot that you will need to add cold water to cool it down.

- **Stop the drip:** Dripping taps waste lots of water. If you have any drips, use the opportunity to upgrade to a flow-reducing model. These taps mix air and water, saving up to 60% of your water consumption.

These are just a few ideas to reduce your energy consumption. You can find some extra handy tips and tools online at [Energy Made Easy](#) and [Your Energy Savings](#).

40° Centigrade is more than enough to have a shower or wash the dishes.



Photo: Scott Umstatted / unsplash.com

How to calculate my savings

When you start to consume energy more responsibly, monitor the results — it's very motivating to see your positive impact. There are several ways to do this:

- **Check the differences in your bills:** Once you start changing your consumption habits, keep track of variations in your bills. The savings will encourage you to carry on with the changes.
- **Measure the energy you use:** Why wait till the bills arrive? If you have a smart meter at home, you can track your consumption online; major Australian energy providers have created web portals where

you can monitor usage. For individual appliances, you can use smart plugs that track daily energy consumption.

- **Smart monitoring with apps:** In the age of the smart phone, you can track energy use from the palm of your hand. Apps like Powershop and the AGL Energy app read your smart meter to help you track and control energy usage. The new Evergen app — backed by CSIRO — analyses and optimises electricity use in solar-powered homes.

4. Other types of responsible consumption

Responsible consumption is a set of habits that can also be applied to our lives outside the home. In Australia, we are lucky to live in a world of plenty, but this does not mean that we have the right to squander the resources we have at our disposal.

Responsible consumption also means causing the smallest possible impact with your waste. To achieve this, you should reduce your consumption, re-use the products you buy and, when you cannot use them anymore, recycle them. We call this the rule of three Rs: Reduce, Re-use, Recycle.

Responsible consumption also means only using resources that you really need, and always looking out for new ways to respect the environment and social equality.

That's why there is a direct relationship between responsible consumption and Fair Trade, which is our preferred alternative to conventional trade. When you buy Fair Trade, you ensure that the families who produce the goods receive the right price, without harming the environment. Fair Trade is a sustainable model that doesn't exploit workers or the environment. You can identify Fair Trade shops by the certification stamp they use, and you can buy from them knowing for certain that the impact of your choice is a positive one.

When you buy Fair Trade, you ensure that the families who produce the goods receive the right price and treat the environment with respect.



Matawalu, Fiji: Seveci supplies mangoes to Oxfam Shops producer FRIEND to support his income and provide security against rising food and utilities prices. Photo: Alicja Grocz/OxfamAUS.

Ultimately, Fair Trade is about understanding where your products come from, and the social and environmental impact they will have. If you are not paying attention, your purchases could be doing great good, or on the contrary, great harm to other people. This is especially true in the fashion industry; we all know about the human rights violations that take place in sweat shops.

To find information about which fashion brands you can trust, check our [Naughty or Nice](#) list. You can make your own small contribution by simply choosing brands that comply with the law and treat their workers ethically.

To find Fair Trade fashion brands, look no further than the [Oxfam Shop](#). There, you will find a range of beautiful clothing and accessories that have all been made without causing harm to workers or the environment. Not only will you look great, you will feel great about your responsible purchase.



Kolkata, India: Meeta, an artisan at Madhya Kalikata Shilpangan, plies her craft. Photo: Atul Loke/Panos/OxfamAUS.



Sydney, Australia: Ethical fashion accessories at the Oxfam Shop. Photo: Jon Love/OxfamAUS



OXFAM
Australia

