

# Waste Reduction & Recycling

## IN OFFICE BUILDINGS



## FACT SHEET

Resource NSW recently audited nine office buildings in Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle and found that tenants in these buildings could save significant sums of money just by using office equipment, stationery and resources more efficiently. The audits showed that:

- If tenants in these 9 buildings double-sided just 50% of all paper used they would save close to \$500,000 per year in paper purchasing costs.
- The stationery in general waste bins that was still perfectly usable had a yearly replacement cost of \$250,000.

Tenants were surveyed on issues such as recycling in the work place. Most respondents felt that their offices and businesses would benefit both economically and environmentally by better managing resources. Similarly, most tenants believed that office workers would and indeed should participate in environmental programs.



### How much waste are you (possibly) generating?

These estimates of waste generation rates and costs are based on the audit results. Compare how your office is performing, or calculate the amount of resources that are probably being thrown out.

#### Waste estimates for office buildings

- **7.8 kg** of waste & recycling generated/**m<sup>2</sup>/year** \*
- **173kg** of waste & recycling generated/**employee\*\*/ year**
- **1.7 reams** of copy paper are thrown out or recycled/**m<sup>2</sup>/year**
- **39 reams** of copy paper are thrown out or recycled / **employee/year**
- **55%** paper and **10%** cardboard is in the general waste stream
- **5%** commingled (glass and plastic drink containers, aluminium cans) is in the general waste stream
- **\$23** worth of reusable stationery thrown out/**employee/year**

\* Year = based on 261 working days

\*\*Employee = full time employee, or the equivalent

### Answers available

Information on how you can introduce, implement or improve resource management in your office is available from [www.resource.nsw.gov.au/officebuildings](http://www.resource.nsw.gov.au/officebuildings). Download a range of free guides, case studies and other tools including:

- **Waste Reduction in Office Buildings: A guide for tenants** (2002). The how and why of putting a resource management system into your office. Also includes tips on getting support from building managers, standard signs, posters and other useful communication tools.
- **Know Your Paper: A guide to purchasing recycled content office paper** (2002). A comprehensive Australian guide to choosing and using recycled content office paper, and determining its compatibility with office equipment.
- **Office Products: A guide to sustainable purchasing and use** (2002). A comprehensive Australian guide to choosing and using office equipment to minimise environmental impact in the office place.
- **The Buy Recycled Guide** (2nd Ed). Lists products with recycled content available in NSW for the workplace or home.

The waste estimate figures indicate that more than 7 million reams of paper are thrown out from Sydney CBD offices each year – that is made from the equivalent of approximately 1/4 million trees.

Most of that paper is only printed on one side – if 50% of the paper was double sided then 1.75 million fewer reams of paper would be thrown away, saving \$9.6 million!

## FAQs

### Why?

*Why should we bother with trying to waste less and recycle more?*

- Help conserve scarce natural resources.
- Reduce company waste disposal costs.
- Improve corporate image by caring for the environment.

### How?

*How do I get support from senior management and/or the building manager to get systems put in place?*

- Highlight potential cost savings.
- Mention that paper makes up over 50% of most buildings' general waste.

*How do I raise awareness of better resource management, waste reduction and recycling among colleagues?*

- Inform staff about company's current waste and recycling systems.
- Involve staff in proposed recycling systems or improvements.
- Provide feedback to staff on results of their efforts.



*How can we close the loop and start buying recycled content product?*

- Let staff know about the range of quality recycled content paper now on the market.
- Trial recycled content paper in your office.

### What?

*What facilities, services and systems are available?*

- There are many variations on the systems and services your company can use to help reduce waste and recover resources.
- You can now plan systems and services that suit all of your waste management needs.

*What is the best system to meet our office needs?*

- Read up on the *Waste Reduction in Office Buildings: A guide for tenants* (2002), it can answer your waste reduction questions.

### Costs/Benefits

*Will it cost us more to manage our resources better?*

- In most cases the answer is no. Generally speaking it is cheaper to recycle than it is to dispose of waste to landfill.

### Communication

*Where can I find suitable signs, posters and other communication tools?*

- Check out our website, it has a range of downloadable tools and resources.

## Contact details

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## Further information

Further information about office resource management can be obtained from Resource NSW:

- [www.resource.nsw.gov.au/officebuildings](http://www.resource.nsw.gov.au/officebuildings)

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