

# Waste Wisdoms

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## History of Waste

In nature, the concept of waste does not exist due to biological cycles, organisms known as decomposers, transform waste products of other living beings into precious resources. *(Extract from Eniscuola energy and environment).*

Before last century, waste was mainly organic, products discarded by workshops and kitchens, human and animal waste, and carcasses.

Rarer inorganic waste passed through the social chain – useless items tossed by the rich, became precious for the poor.

In the Middle Ages, waste was buried underground near settlements, where archaeologists have found remains of meals, small tools and earthenware. The Greeks were the first to introduce a civic cleaning system, and sweepers were appointed (probably slaves) to clean Athens. The Romans established the first public waste collection and disposal service, exported throughout its Empire. The Industrial Revolution saw intensive exploitation of resources with mass production replacing craftsmen.

Today we are a consumer society increasingly using disposable objects that are no longer repaired or reutilized, and easily replaced. Excessive waste outstrips our planet's capacity to dispose of it. Waste has also changed — increasing glass, metal and organic matter, and newer materials like plastics that remain in the environment for years.

[www.wastenot.org.au/history-of-waste/](http://www.wastenot.org.au/history-of-waste/)

Welcome to 2021. This issue we present a brief history of waste and look at REDUCE, the 2nd tier on the Waste Hierarchy, with tips and why reducing red meat is good for all. We introduce the Waste Reducer Superhero challenge and competition. Details over page.

## REDUCE meat, it's good for the planet

Australian Conservation Foundation data shows reducing red meat by 150 grams a serving a week, saves 300kg of greenhouse gas pollution a year – like **taking an eighth of cars off Australian roads!** The CSIRO estimates animal farming uses half the Australian continent and causes over 90% land degradation. Producing 500 grams of meat requires over 8,000 litres of water.



## Eating mindfully, better health for people and animals

People in developing countries eat simple grains like rice, corn and wheat. The UN's Environment Programme estimates **nearly half the world's grain is fed to animals.** The ABS estimates over 500 million animals are slaughtered in Australia every year. Live exports result in animals suffering painful procedures, infrequent monitoring or care, and mustering stress, even before shipment - not an idyllic life! National Vegetarian Week estimates reducing meat consumption lowers risks of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, colorectal, prostate and bowel cancer, and obesity.





## REDUCE YOUR USE OF PLASTIC

Plastic requires huge amounts of energy and resources and increases carbon emissions. Less than 10% is recycled. Over half of all plastic ends up in landfill or oceans where it transforms into microplastics that leach into our waterways and food. More on plastics next issue.



### Reduce the use of plastic straws



Use bamboo straws. We have 8 sets (5 straws & cleaner) to give away - first in first served from Unison.

### Make your own River Mint Tea

Pick fresh River Mint from the Food Forest (56-70 Derby St) to make a refreshing hot or cold cup of tea. Bring water to the boil; add a handful of washed fresh mint leaves. Steep for 3 to 5 minutes. To sweeten add a teaspoon of honey. For iced tea, fill glasses with ice then pour tea over.



## Unison Projects

Unison's Enterprise Cleaning Team has done the audit of the Kensington Estates red (landfill) and yellow (recycle) bins so there are the right number of bins for all properties. Also new bin signage in English and different languages is going up in bin rooms explaining what rubbish goes into which bin. It's important not to put plastic bags in the yellow bins.

In 2019, the Healthy Living and Learning lunch program for seniors cooked 1784 meals using food donated by SecondBite, a food rescue program. This saved 2,280kg of food going to waste. In 2020 1000kg of food was saved.

## Kids Activity: *Wanted SUPERHEROES!*

1. **Water Warrior** reminds everyone to turn off the tap! A running tap wastes 12 litres per minute. Don't let the tap run while you rinse dishes, clean your teeth or before you shower.
2. **Switch Master** turns all lights off in empty rooms, saves energy and money.
3. **Energy Defender** unplugs all unused electronics- TV's, game consoles, microwaves, printers and phone chargers that use standby mode, saves energy and money.
4. **Competition:** Draw one of the Superheroes, leave in Unison's mailbox (42 Derby St) with your name and contact details.



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We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land.

