

## Food waste and the environment

Every kilogram of food that ends up in landfill emits harmful gas, pollutes waterways and wastes the resources required to grow and transport the food.

Food waste is straining our environment. Redirecting surplus food to people in need is an excellent way to reduce food waste and help the planet.

## Did you know?

- Australians waste more than \$5.2 billion worth of food annually (i).
- The major resources required to grow food are water, fertilizer, labor, land, transport, petrol and packaging – all wasted when food is thrown out
- Dumping a kilogram of beef means wasting the 50,000 litres of water used in its production (ii).
- 47% of municipal waste in landfill is food and green organic waste (iii).
- Landfill pollutes rivers and waterways (iv)
- Food waste in Australian landfills is the second largest source of methane – a gas 23 times more harmful than CO<sub>2</sub> from cars (v).

## Why is food wasted in the production and retail cycle?

- Blemishes and imperfections make certain fresh food unfit for retail
- Short shelf and sale life
- Over-ordering and over-catering occurs
- Consumers demand perfect produce
- Logistical and transport issues



## Since 2005, SecondBite's fresh food rescue has ensured:

- Over 3,000,000 kgs of fresh food that would otherwise have gone to waste has been redistributed; saving 168 million litres of water – equivalent of 67 Olympic swimming pools
- Saving 2.7 million kgs of CO<sub>2</sub>e – equivalent of taking 594 cars off the road for one year
- All our food waste is sent directly to farms to feed animals, not driven to landfill



## What can YOU do to reduce YOUR food waste at home? Top 5 tips

- Support food businesses that participate in food-rescue programs with SecondBite
- Create great meals that are freezer-friendly and think of preserves, pickles and jams
- Plan meals, minimise packaging and write shopping lists
- Get a worm farm or compost, with a veggie patch to match!
- Get an education - check out The Sustainable Table and Food Wise

(i) Australia Institute “What a waste” (2009); (ii) Australian Food and Grocery Council “Environment Report 2003” (2003); (iii) Australia Institute “What a waste” (2009); (iv) Lundqvist, J. et al “Water waste: from field to fork” (2008); (v) Hyder Consulting “Hyder Environmental Benefits Report” (2008)

