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Media release

For immediate release

Make a list and save this Christmas

It seems that Santa might have been on to something when he made a list and checked it twice.

With Australians spending over \$1,079ⁱ at Christmas in recent years, some forward planning for meals and presents can lead to big savings.

On average, Australian households throw out 14% of weekly groceries worth about \$1,100 each yearⁱⁱ, and this is most pervasive at Christmas. Collectively that's more than \$10 billion of food every year, representing almost half of all municipal waste that goes to landfill.

Planning meals ahead of time and shopping accordingly, opening food as you need it and resisting the urge to over-cater will reduce this waste and the cost of festive celebrations.

Planet Ark's *The 12 DOs of Christmas* awareness campaign includes tips for reducing food waste and excess packaging, more environmentally friendly choices when buying gifts and recycling items like wrapping paper, foil, cartons, drink containers, plastic and cards as well as electronics and batteries.

"At Christmas we spend more, eat more and party more than any other time of the year, so it's no wonder that councils report dramatic waste spikes over the festive season and everyone's credit card bills skyrocket," explains Ryan Collins, Recycling Programs Manager at Planet Ark. "It's easy to get carried away with the excitement and buy too much. When you throw food in the bin it's pretty much like throwing money away. It also represents a waste of the water, fuel and resources it took to get the food from the paddock to your plate."

"Meal planning, sticking to a list and buying presents in plenty of time avoids those last-minute panic buys, saving you money and lessening the environmental impact of Christmas."

This year we're tipped to spend an average of \$539ⁱⁱⁱ on presents, up 28% on last year, many of which are unwanted. Taking someone shopping for their present, giving experiences, gift vouchers or donations are great ways of reducing the likelihood of a present sitting in a cupboard unused.

Electronic waste is also a big theme at Christmas as people receive new electronic items like mobiles, tablets and computers or toys as gifts, which are often battery-heavy. As electronics include non-renewable and toxic materials, it's important to make sure that old ones are re-homed or responsibly recycled.

"Christmas is a great time of the year but it's true that getting everyone together can result in an argument or two. Checking RecyclingNearYou or downloading the free recycling app is the best way to avoid arguments over what goes in the recycling!" says Collins.

The interactive app draws data from the RecyclingNearYou site for every Australian council and allows users to easily search for information about how to recycle over 170 household items.

The RecycleSmart App and *The 12 DOs of Christmas* tips are available on recyclingnearyou.com.au, a comprehensive online household recycling directory on which the app is based. For more information call the Recycling Hotline on 1300 733 712.

The recyclingnearyou.com.au website and hotline are supported by sponsors Bingo Bins, MobileMuster, TechCollect, Tetra Pak and 'Cartridges 4 Planet Ark'.

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ⁱ ASIC MoneySmart <https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/managing-your-money/budgeting/spending/australias-christmas-spending>

ⁱⁱ RaboDirect Financial Health Barometer 2016, Food and Farming Report

ⁱⁱⁱ Finder.com.au <https://www.finder.com.au/press-release-nov-2016-record-xmas-aussies-to-spend-10-billion-on-gifts>

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