

# WASTE REDUCTION MANUAL

## *Close the Loop Buy Recycled*

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## *Buy Recycled and Recycling*

CLOSE THE LOOP  
BUY RECYCLED

*Over three million tonnes per year of solid waste is collected for recycling in Victoria. Where does it all go? The long term success of recycling depends on developing sustainable markets for recycled products. The recycling loop is only complete when products made from recycled materials are purchased.*

### **Benefits of a Buy Recycled Program**

The benefits of implementing a Buy Recycled strategy within your organisation include:

- Creates stable markets. When organisations buy recycled goods they are developing stable long term markets for recyclable materials. This improves revenue from recycling programs.
- Reduced disposal of recyclables. Buying recycled products ensures that recyclable materials are reprocessed and not merely stock piled or disposed of to landfill.
- Conserving resources and energy. Buying recycled products reduces dependence on virgin raw materials.
- Creation of jobs and economic development opportunities. This is basic economics. Increased demand for products means that manufacturers are able to invest in processing and other equipment.
- Provides a proactive rather than reactive approach to waste management problems. Remember materials are not recycled until they are reprocessed into new products and purchased.
- Enhances an organisation's image. Buying recycled products and explaining why can foster goodwill among your employees, customers and the community.
- Saves money. In the long term buying recycled, recyclable and less wasteful products can reduce costs.
- Other benefits. Some recycled products have additional advantages of reduced maintenance requirements, longer lifespans and occupational health and safety benefits.

### **Recycled Products: Quality**

Don't be put off by the misconception that recycled products are inferior. In the past, some recycled products did compare unfavourably with virgin material alternatives. However new technologies and greater attention to product development, quality standards and testing have resulted in improved products that compare favourably on a cost and quality basis.

## *Recycled Products: More than just paper*

*The range of recycled products available is extensive and is available for a wide variety of industries. As an illustration the following products are available:*

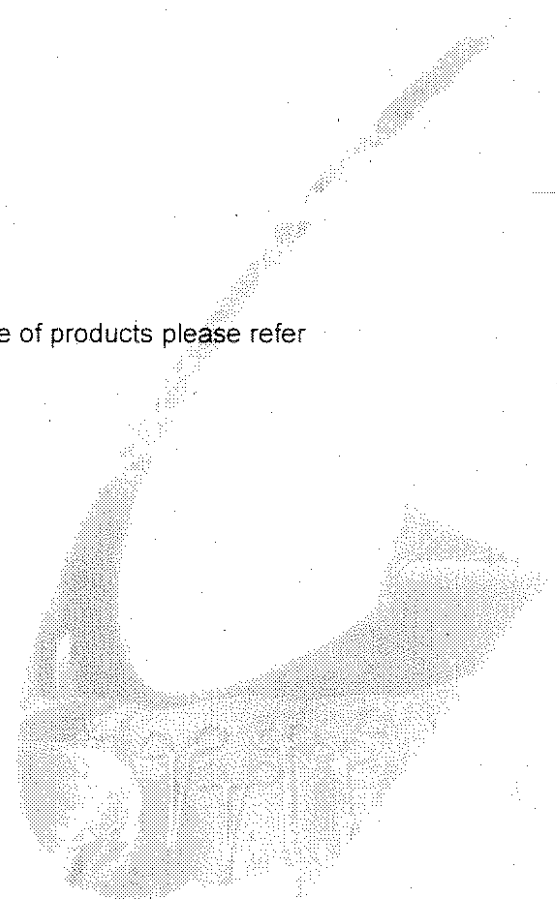
### **Office Products:**

- Furniture
- Refurbished office equipment
- Recycled toner cartridges
- Plastic products: note holders, trays
- Packaging material
- Recycled computer disks
- Tissue and towel products
- Printing and writing paper
- Bags (paper and plastics)

### **Other Products:**

- Plastics (partitions, decking, fences, posts, parking stops etc)
- Compost/mulch from green waste
- Mats (plastic and rubber)
- Animal bedding
- Concrete
- Retread tyres
- Recycled timber
- Water and sewerage products

This is only a sample of the products available. For a full range of products please refer to the reference section.



## *Making a Commitment to Buy Recycled*

CLOSE THE LOOP  
BUY RECYCLED

To create lasting change a Buy Recycled Purchasing Policy must be developed with executive commitment. This could be linked to your organisation's Environmental Policy.

A Buy Recycled Policy which fits into an organisation's purchasing policy could include some of the following elements:

- a general preference for recycled products
- a price preference – where an organisation is willing to pay a higher price (such as 5 or 10 per cent) for recycled paper or recycled products
- an allocation or goal where a certain percentage of total purchases must have recycled content
- reviewing purchasing specifications to eliminate barriers to the purchase of recycled, recyclable and reusable products.

### **Other Tips**

- Develop networks with Purchasing and Environmental Departments within your organisation.
- Develop an awareness of the recycled products that are available.
- Speak to other buyers about experiences with recycled products.
- Promote your organisation's Buy Recycled Policy to your suppliers.
- Ask suppliers if they stock recycled products.
- If you deal with purchasing organisations encourage them to consider recycled products.
- Inform your suppliers of your interest in purchasing recycled products.
- Develop life cycle costing criteria to include maintenance properties of recycled products.
- Encourage other organisations you deal with to Buy Recycled.
- Remember to give yourself credit. Publicise your results.

This material was developed from the 'Buy Recycled Training Manual' prepared by the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority.

### **References**

EcoRecycle Victoria's website: [www.ecorecycle.vic.gov.au](http://www.ecorecycle.vic.gov.au) contains a data base of recycled products.

EcoRecycle Victoria, 'Recycled Products Guide', available mid 1998.

'Buy Recycled Training Manual' Fifth Edition prepared by the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority, USA, 1997.

