

Big Issue - Food Waste

Did you know Australians throw away 1 in 5 bags of fresh food they buy? This incredible amount of waste usually ends up in landfill, causing more problems to our environment.

There are some big issues around the way we produce and use food that is causing a great deal of waste. This is the topic that your group will be looking at.

Food Waste

There are two sides to waste when talking about food:

1. The packaging waste that our food arrives in
2. The food that we waste when we throw food away

In this section, we are talking about the second type of waste; food waste. So what's the big deal with throwing out a couple of bread crusts? Well, unfortunately, food waste is not all about bread crusts. Australians actually throw away 20% of the food that we buy (that's one in five of our food shopping bags). Most of the food we throw away is fresh food, things like bananas that have gone too brown, carrots that are floppy, or meat and dairy past the used by date. After that, we throw out a lot of leftovers - the bits of the meals we prepared but didn't eat. In addition, we're throwing away loads of packaged foods, drinks, frozen foods and take-aways. Not only are we wasting a huge amount of good food, but most of it is going into the bin and onto landfill where it releases methane (a potent greenhouse gas) during its breakdown processes. The food waste problem also relates to the food that doesn't even make it to the supermarket: because of strange ideas of what fruit and vegetables should look like, many fresh foods are wasted because of the way they look, not how they taste. Avocado too round? Banana too big? Throw them out? Or enjoy them?

Big Question

- What are the environmental costs of food waste?

