



# Make it a sustainable Christmas

**It's the time of year to rethink our consumption habits and rethink your relationship with "things".**

**Make it a sustainable Christmas with these great ideas:**

- Refuse to buy more than is necessary
- Reduce the packaging and wrapping
- Re-use items – find new uses for old objects
- Re-gift unsuitable gifts
- Repair or up-cycle objects to make great new gifts

Or be like the New Jones' and value experiences over "stuff". Wonderful experiences, great memories, photos to share and no ill-fitting undies or wasted wrapping paper in sight.

**Give a subscription or membership to:**

- Geelong Sustainability
- Surf Coast Energy Group
- Barwon Heads Sustainability Group
- Geelong Organic Gardeners
- Diggers Seed Club
- Permaculture Geelong
- The Wilderness Society
- Friends of the Earth
- A magazine such as Treadlie (cycling,) Sanctuary (housing), Green (housing), ReNew (energy), The Ecologist (environment), Living Green (lifestyle).
- A local toy library
- A seed saving group, rare fruits association, or some other specialist area of interest

**Give an experience rather than stuff:**

- Enrolment in a course
- Tickets to a movie or show
- An eco-tour
- A tent and small, efficient camping equipment – to encourage clean bush walking and adventure
- Volunteer at your child's or grandchild's school or at a local school in need
- Nippers at a local Surf Life Saving Club
- Swimming lessons for children or adults
- Learn to ride a bike
- Driver training for sons, daughters, grandkids...
- Tickets to a local fun park or activity
- Learn to cook class such as those at Magic Meadow or Cheeselinks
- Day spa voucher

- Encourage regular walking for a lifetime of better health by compiling a selection of walks from [walkingmaps.com.au](http://walkingmaps.com.au)
- Connect kids with nature by do bush playgroup at Nurture in Nature

**Wrap gifts in reusable materials (or give them a second life)**

- Green or calico shopping bags, even ones that aren't much good for carrying things anymore can be used as wrapping
- Tea towel, hand towel, table clothes or other linen that can be part of their gift
- Bamboo placemats, roll around a cylinder
- Microfibre cleaning cloths
- Reuse newspaper, old wrapping paper, ribbons and material

**Home-made gifts**

- Make jam, pickles, chutney, dukka or preserves
- Give a voucher for a service you are happy to provide – babysitting, gardening, cleaning or maintenance
- Build someone a compost bay
- Strike plant cuttings or grow-on seeds for gifts
- Build someone a worm farm using polystyrene boxes or an old bath or trough
- Offer labour to clear an area for a new garden and break up the soil
- Make a Christmas wreath from grapevine and other home-grown materials
- Turn an old steering wheel and gearstick into an exciting racing machine for a little one
- Fashion left over pieces of rope and hose into essential "fireman" gear

**Encourage gardening and growing food**

- A potted Christmas tree that can be planted out after Christmas – could be a fruit tree or a native
- A pot of organic, edible plant seedlings or seeds
- A bottle of worm wee
- A container of compost worms or homemade compost
- Gardening tools – a good spade or fork
- A yard cart, secateurs or gardening gloves
- A compost bin
- A delivery of garden mulch
- Books on organic gardening, composting, and/or plants
- Potted kitchen herbs in organic medium
- A gift voucher for nursery plants or environmental products



### Gifts for green living

- A non-disposable lunch kit – thermos or drink bottle, lunch box for nude food, cloth serviettes.
- A real razor – not a disposable one
- Underarm deodorising rock salt crystal
- A keep-cup
- New green nappies
- A yoghurt maker
- Rechargeable batteries with a re-charger
- Handkerchiefs or cloth serviettes
- Canvas, string or cane shopping bag
- A selection of 'use with water only' microfibre cloths
- Cosmetics and toiletries made from natural ingredients and not tested on animals.
- A laundry bucket of ecologically sound cleaning products
- A garden pond – with optional solar-powered fountain
- A field guide on birds and local reptiles
- A bokashi bin
- Onya or similar reusable shopping bags
- Mesh produce bags

### For children

- Recycled toys – a repainted bicycle, trike, scooter...
- Homemade cushions and beanbags – with environmentally friendly and safe stuffing
- A wooden loom and natural yarns for weaving
- A doll's or action figure's tent made of recycled fabrics
- Science, craft or nature books
- A homemade backyard swing, tree house or rope
- A small gardening kit, tools and organic seeds
- Wooden or cane furniture
- Roller skates or a bicycle for energy efficient travel
- Recycled or re-used paper, fastened into a book
- Weatherproof boots
- Pets such as ducklings or chickens, guinea pigs or rabbit (to help mow the lawn)
- Recycled clothing, shoes and toys



### Gifts that support a greater good

- Offset your holiday travel through one of the many programs available
- Support local families who are struggling right now through one of many charities such as Geelong Mums
- Who Gives a Crap – flush poverty down the loo with the world's most impactful toilet paper
- KIVA – Loans that change lives. Empower people around the world with a micro-loan of as little as \$25: [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)
- One Girl – Sierra Leone, West Africa is one of the worst places on earth to be born a girl. But when a girl is educated, everything changes: [www.onegirl.org.au](http://www.onegirl.org.au)
- Oxfam Unwrapped – offering a range of totally unexpected gift ideas that will help transform the life of a person living in poverty: [unwrapped.oxfam.org.au](http://unwrapped.oxfam.org.au)
- Médecins Sans Frontières Australia – at Christmas or in memorial for a friend or loved one: [www.msf.org.au](http://www.msf.org.au)
- Shout for Good! – Change the World – one small change at a time! Download the app and choose your local environmental or humanitarian cause. Make small change donations to your giftee's favourite cause – encourage them to match you: [www.shoutforgood.com](http://www.shoutforgood.com)
- Partners in Aid – a Melbourne charity established in 1962. Consider making a donation to improve the livelihoods of people in Southern India, Kolkata and Bangladesh. 93% of all funds raised passed on to their project partners. They provide a gift certificate on request. [www.partnersinaid.org.au](http://www.partnersinaid.org.au)

### Christmas cards

Still feel the need to send Christmas cards?

- Choice magazine recommends purchasing directly from your chosen charity to maximise the funds going to the cause. There are many including UNICEF (50% to the charity), Oxfam, The Smith Family, St Vincent de Paul, Frontier Services – Uniting Church, RSPCA, Amnesty International, The Cancer Council.
- Hallmark boxed greeting cards – 10% of wholesale (not retail) goes to National Breast Cancer Foundation.
- Or, reuse cards from last year by cutting off the back and using a bit of creative licence.

If you're still feeling stuck, head online and do a search, there are a multitude of sustainable gifts that will be perfect for your loved one.