

Guideline

Green Purchasing



What is green purchasing?

Green purchasing refers to the purchase of products after taking into consideration the environmental effects associated with their manufacture, distribution, use and disposal. Green purchasing may also be referred to as sustainable or environmentally preferable purchasing.

What are the benefits of green purchasing?

As the buyer of products you are in a good position to minimise environmental impacts through your supply chain by considering the environment when choosing products.

Green Purchasing can achieve a number of benefits:

- Reduce energy and water consumption (which can reduce costs)
- Improve resource use efficiency
- Reduce waste (which can reduce waste disposal costs)
- Reduce environmental health impacts of products and services
- Reduce pollution
- Provide markets for new environmentally preferable products
- “Close the loop” on recycling, improving the viability of recycling
- Provide leadership to the community
- Encourage industry to adopt cleaner technologies and produce products with lower environmental impacts

Where to start

The introduction of Green Purchasing in a business will be most successful if it is phased in gradually. Green Purchasing is also often incorrectly perceived as being more expensive and inferior in quality and performance to less green substitutes. The following actions can be adopted to increase the success of Green Purchasing:

- Develop a Green Purchasing Policy
- Set timelines for introducing Green Purchasing Strategies (listed below)
- Set targets relating to Green Purchasing
- Conduct a review of current spending involving an assessment of environmental risks

- Measure the current spend on green goods and services
- Prioritise opportunities for green purchasing by identifying the spend areas where environmental impacts can be reduced
- Seek training and educational opportunities for relevant staff in the field of green purchasing.
- Green purchasing strategies
- The following strategies can be used to incorporate Green Purchasing into your business:
- Avoid products or services made with, containing, or using, environmentally harmful substances
- Avoid over-packaged goods
- Maximise your use of recycled and recyclable products
- Minimise your use of non-renewable resources
- Buy only what you need, rather than in bulk
- Buy energy efficient equipment and products
- Buy water efficient equipment and products
- Work with suppliers and contractors who have adopted an environmental policy.

Further Information

- Australian Government Environmental Purchasing Guide www.environment.gov.au
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) www.unep.fr
- Eco-Buy www.ecobuy.org.au

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