



## Sustainable Communities SA Inc.

### ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

The ecological footprint is a term that is increasingly being used to refer to the effects that humans have on the environment. The ecological footprint of an individual, a city, a country, or humanity, is a measure of how much productive land and water they require to produce all the resources they consume and to absorb all the waste they generate, using prevailing technology. It is measured in global hectares. A global hectare is one hectare of biologically productive space with world-average productivity. In 1999 the biosphere had 11.4 billion hectares (28.2 billion acres) of biologically productive space corresponding to roughly one quarter of the planet's surface. Worldwide, there exist 1.8 biologically productive global hectares per person. However, the world population is increasing. Australians have the fourth highest ecological footprint in the world with an average Australian eco-footprint of 6.4 hectares.

Sustainable Communities SA has chosen to use the [Ecological Footprint Calculator](#) as it gives members a numerical indicator of their personal, household or business impact on the environment. Your personal ecological footprint is made up of a number of things including the energy that goes into producing your food, water and consumer products, as well as electricity to run your home, fuel to provide transport, and the disposal of waste.

The [Consumption Atlas](#) produced by the [Australian Conservation Foundation](#) is based on research by Sydney University's Centre for Integrated Sustainability Analysis. It provides information on greenhouse pollution, water use and an eco-footprint for every postcode in Australia. At the time of the research Norwood Payneham St Peters had a higher consumption than the state average and the national average. Visit the website to work out how well your area compares.

#### **Greenhouse pollution**

- Norwood Payneham St Peters - 19.22 tonnes/person/year
- State average - 17.24 tonnes/person/year
- National average - 18.9 tonnes/person/year

Major contributors to greenhouse pollution in metropolitan Adelaide are:

- Electricity 17.9%
- Transport 10%
- Food 23.3%

#### **Water use**

- Norwood Payneham St Peters - 760,000 litres/person/year
- State average - 680,000 litres/person/year
- National average - 722,500 litres/person/year

Major contributors to water use in metropolitan Adelaide are:

- Food 39.7%
- Household water use 20.5%

#### **Eco-footprint**

- Norwood Payneham St Peters - 7.05 hectares/person
- State average - 6.56 hectares/person
- National average - 6.4 hectares/person

Major contributors to the eco-footprint in metropolitan Adelaide are:

- Food 48.7%
- Clothing and fabrics 7.0%



## Sustainable Communities SA Inc.

### **Reducing our ecological footprint by 30%**

The challenge for us all – individuals, households, businesses and government – is to reduce our ecological footprint. There is a call by many concerned people and agencies for that to be 30% by 2020.

### **What would that mean for us as individuals?**

The ecological footprint for Norwood Payneham St Peters is 7.05 hectares/person/year. To reduce that by 30% means that our footprint would need to be 4.83 hectares/person/year.

### **How do we proceed?**

1. Calculate your personal ecological footprint. We recommend you use the Global Footprint Network Calculator at [www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/)
2. Consider the changes that are possible in the areas of energy, water, food, transport and waste using the Resources papers on the SCSA website.
3. Discuss with others:
  - What changes can you make?
  - How you can work with friends or neighbours cooperatively?
4. Join a Sustainable Communities SA Community Group for support (contact Beth Mylius [bmylius@chariot.net.au](mailto:bmylius@chariot.net.au) to find out about your nearest Community Group).

If your ecological footprint is already below 4.83 hectares you may like to keep going and try to help some of your neighbours by sharing or averaging your global hectares. For example people living alone will often have a higher ecological footprint that is difficult to reduce.

So join us in taking up the challenge through Sustainable Communities SA

- Join Sustainable Communities SA as your commitment
- Calculate your ecological footprint. You may like to send the information to our ecological footprint register as part of the 30% reduction challenge. This is currently held by Beth Mylius [bmylius@chariot.net.au](mailto:bmylius@chariot.net.au)
- Work to reduce your individual or group ecological footprint
- Recalculate after 6 months

We have developed the [SCSA Ecofootprint Action Booklet](#) to help you set goals and keep track of your progress.