Green Common Rooms and Kitchens

Common rooms and kitchens are hubs for energy and water use and waste, however creating a sustainable living space is possible if everyone makes a few small changes.

Why this is important

• Every year, approximately one third of global food production is lost or wasted.
• Every time food is thrown in the bin, resources such as energy and water that were required to produce that food are also wasted. Food waste is considered a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions.
• Local produce avoids greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.
• Appliances on standby power can account for up to 4% of the average home’s energy use.
• Reduce, reuse, recycle minimises the amount of waste that ends up in landfill and the environment. It also saves on costs from purchasing single-use products.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

• Only take a portion of food that you know you will eat to minimise food waste.
• Avoid using serving trays, as using crockery alone has been shown to reduce food waste.
• Use a durable mug or thermos for take away coffee or tea.
• Buy local and seasonal food, as well as fair trade.
• Switch off lights and fans/heaters when no one is in the common room and turn off the television and other devices when no one is watching it.
• Unplug small kitchen appliances when not in use.
• Only fill the kettle with the amount of water required.
• Wait until you have a full load before turning on the dishwasher and use eco-settings where possible.
• Use environmentally friendly dishwashing detergent.
• Minimise what you put down the drain.
• Avoid bottled water, as it requires high amounts of energy and water to produce just one bottle and most discarded bottles end up in landfill.
• Use reusable plates, cups and cutlery or encourage residents to bring their own.
• If necessary, purchase recycled kitchen products such as paper towels and napkins.
• Place a co-mingled recycling bin alongside general waste in common areas.