



A clear out with a conscience

Time to declutter? We've all been there. And we know it can get messy – with stuff flying from the keep pile to the toss pile and back again, and arguments over your other half's 'best' holey trackies.

Before you fill up a carload and head to the landfill, have a think about how you can declutter by treading as lightly as you can on the environment. Our tips will help you decide what to repair, re-home, recycle or toss as a very last resort.

To toss or not to toss?

That's the first question... and the maybe pile is always the biggest, right? To help curb the umming and aching, try asking these questions to decide which way its contents should go.

- Why am I keeping it?
- Do I really (really) want, like, use or need it?
- What will I gain by letting this go?
- How many of these do I really need?

If you decide it's not for you, then it's time to decide what's next for it. With a bit of time and thought, we can give new life to something destined for the landfill.

Repair

Let's get crafty – because fixing up is a better option than throwing out and buying new. By buying less and taking care to make things last longer, we're reducing the massive impact on Mother Earth's resources used to a) make them in the first place, and b) help them break down – which takes longer than we care to think about!

A stitch here or a lick of paint there could make your things good as new. Not your forte? Try finding a friend, family member or neighbour who's handy on the tools or sewing machine. We find a batch of baking or a beverage of their choice helps sweeten the deal.

Re-home

We might not have a use for that couch, cupboard or t-shirt anymore – but there are plenty of people or places that might. We love the win-win-win here: clearing space, giving to others, and diverting waste from our landfills which are swiftly filling up.

- **To your friends and family.** Why not have some people over and let them have a rummage through the things you don't want?
- **To someone who's willing to pay.** Consider throwing it on [TradeMe](#), [Facebook Marketplace](#) or your local [Neighbourly](#) if you've got time and think it's worth a bit of cash.
- **To those in need.** Your local charity shop might be desperate for the 'heirloom' salt and pepper shakers kindly gifted by your in-laws. It's best to check before you drop off, though. They're often overwhelmed with goods they can't sell because they're in poor condition, it's not the right season, or they've got too much in stock. Let's remember that [they're not our free landfill](#) and make sure donations are clean and in working order.

Think outside the charity shop, too. Your things could put smiles on dials all around the neighbourhood:

- Schools, kindergartens, day cares and toy libraries
- Shelters (eg City Mission, Women's Refuge and local non-profits)
- Community halls
- Food banks and [food rescue schemes](#)
- SPCA
- Places of worship

Recycle

Beyond the standard glass, plastic and cardboard at the kerbside, there are options out there to recycle tricky things like tech, furniture and other household items. If you've got something that's not in good enough nick for repairing or re-homing, put a little research in to see whether you can recycle it locally.

Toss

It's the last resort, but some things do belong in the landfill. If you've exhausted the options above, put it in the bin and feel good about trying your best to give it a new life.