1. What is Earth Hour?

Earth Hour is a global movement uniting people to protect the planet. On the last Saturday of March every year, Earth Hour brings together communities from across the world celebrating a commitment to the planet by switching off lights for one designated hour.

2. When does Earth Hour take place?

Earth Hour 2012 will be held on Saturday March 31 between 8.30PM and 9.30PM in your local time zone.

3. What does Earth Hour aim to achieve?

Earth Hour aims to encourage an interconnected global community to share the opportunities and challenges of creating a sustainable world.

4. What does Earth Hour ask people to do?

Earth Hour encourages individuals, businesses and governments to show leadership on environmental solutions through their actions, to use Earth Hour as a platform to showcase to the world what measures they are taking to reduce their environmental impact. Earth Hour asks everyone to take personal accountability for their impact on the planet and make behavioural changes to facilitate a sustainable lifestyle. Taking the first step is as easy as turning off your lights. By switching off your lights for Earth Hour you are acknowledging and celebrating your commitment to do something more for the planet that goes beyond the hour.

5. Is the campaign more than just lights out?

Earth Hour believes that the symbolism of the hour is incredibly important in bringing people and communities together across the globe. But our aspiration from the beginning was to go far beyond the hour itself. In 2012, Earth Hour launched I Will If You Will, a platform to incentivise and inspire individuals to share their commitment to the planet with their friends, colleagues, leaders and networks. Earth Hour also encourages and promotes many other initiatives around the world, including the Earth Hour City Challenge, the Earth Hour People's Projects and many national and local actions that take the campaign beyond the hour.

6. How long has Earth Hour been going for?

Earth Hour 2012 marks the sixth year of the campaign. On March 31 2007, WWF-Australia inspired Sydney-siders to show their support for climate change action. More than 2.2 million individuals and 2,000 businesses turned their lights out for one hour in the first Earth Hour event.

7. Isn't switching the lights off dangerous? What about public safety?

Earth Hour only asks people to turn off the non-essential lights for one hour - not lights that affect public safety. Earth Hour is also a celebration of the planet so it's important to enjoy the moment in a safe environment.

8. What lights can be safely switched off?

That is a decision that has to be made individually but usually the overhead lights in rooms (whether it is your house or a business), outdoor lighting that does not impact safety, computers, decorative lights, neon signs for advertising, televisions, desk lamps, the list goes on and on. There are a few lights we can say with certainty that should NOT be turned off, including safety lights in public spaces, lights for aviation guidance, traffic lights, security lights, just to name a few. We ask people to use common sense. Before you turn off any lights for public spaces Earth Hour recommends you check with local officials or community centres. In your own home, use common sense with respect to safety. Keep small night lights on for basic safety especially in halls and on stairs. Make sure you have alternative light sources handy before Earth Hour starts, like torches or flashlights. That way if you need to see, you have a light source close at hand, and you can still respect the spirit of Earth Hour and keep yourself and your family safe.

9. What candles should I use for my Earth Hour event?

If you plan on burning candles during Earth Hour, make sure you use 100% beeswax candles or soy
candles, which are gentler on our planet - smoke free, non-toxic and non-allergenic. They are also made of natural products, not petroleum-based materials, so they are effectively carbon neutral (the CO2 they emit has already been taken from the atmosphere to produce the wax). If you’re using candles, though, make sure you take care. We suggest you carefully follow these tips: • Candles should only be used under adult supervision • Candles should never be left unattended • Candles should be kept away from children and pets • Extinguish candles before going to sleep • Keep candles away from flammable liquids and gas-combustible materials • Candles should be kept clear of any combustible materials such as paper, curtains and clothing • Candles should not be placed in windows as they can be blown over. Blinds and curtains can also catch alight • Candles should be placed on a stable, dry, heat-resistant surface away from drafts

10. What is Earth Hour’s position on safety?

Earth Hour wants everyone to be absolutely safe and never to turn off any lights or power that would in any way compromise the safety of any individual in a private or public space. So please put safety first when deciding what lights to turn off during your participation. For Earth Hour’s broader I Will If You Will campaign, we will not support challenges that are not safe, not responsible or not respectful. So if it is dangerous, damaging or defamatory please think of others and think of something else for your challenge. We don’t encourage or endorse irresponsible behaviour. Remember! Positive for the planet, not negative for life or limb.

11. Will my area go completely black?

Earth Hour is not a black out. It is a voluntary action by its participants to show their commitment to an act of change that benefits the planet. For many businesses in city skyscrapers or for many government buildings, the lights are turned off at the end of the business day the Friday before Earth Hour. So Earth Hour is more of a fade-out in some ways than a black-out. There is usually no instant dramatic difference, but rather a gradual dimming of lights starting the day prior. Many major icons and neon signs are switched off for the hour and they are extremely noticeable. You may be able to see dramatic changes in large business districts or at iconic landmarks and buildings around the world and in your city.

12. If everyone turns their lights back on at the same time will there be a power surge?

People celebrate Earth Hour in a variety of ways for different lengths of time, with many continuing to keep their lights off well beyond the designated hour. Therefore, it is highly improbable that everyone will switch their lights back on simultaneously. However, we do work with energy companies and authorities around the world, who assure us that the unlikely scenario of all lights turning back on at the same time will not cause any issues. The load reduction should not be significant enough to disrupt supply post-Earth Hour.

13. Is Earth Hour an annual event?

Yes, Earth Hour is an annual event held at 8:30PM local time on the last Saturday in March across the world.

14. Why is Earth Hour held on the last Saturday of March?

The last weekend of March is around the time of the Spring and Autumn equinoxes in the northern and southern hemispheres respectively, which allows for near coincidental sunset times in both hemispheres, thereby ensuring the greatest visual impact for a global ‘lights out’ event.

15. How many cities/countries/landmarks took part in Earth Hour 2011?

Earth Hour 2011 took place in 5251 cities in 135 countries across all seven continents. Hundreds of millions of people switched their lights off for an hour, taking the reach of Earth Hour in 2011 to 1.8 billion people.

16. What are the criteria for registering city, town or municipality participation in Earth Hour 2012?

For a city, town or municipality to be officially recognised as a participant in Earth Hour 2012 it must meet at least one of the following three criteria: 1. Have the official support of its governing authority (e.g. Governor or Mayor) 2. Have confirmed participation of a significant landmark or icon 3. Have the support of an official Earth Hour ambassador N.B. – to register your city, town or municipality you must be in a position of governing authority to do so. If you are not in a position of authority to register your city, town or municipality we encourage you to get in contact with your local governing authority and ask them to sign up to be officially recognised as an Earth Hour 2012 participating city, town or municipality. Check out our Earth Hour Organiser section for more information.
17. What does a commitment to Earth Hour mean?

By registering for Earth Hour 2012, individuals, communities and businesses are making a commitment to turn their lights off for an hour at 8.30PM on Saturday 31 March in acknowledgement of an act they will undertake for the benefit of the planet. Our expectation is that these individuals, communities and businesses will take action beyond the hour. In 2012, we have launched the I Will If You Will campaign to provide a platform to inspire people to share their commitment to the planet with their friends, colleagues, leaders and networks.

18. Who can participate?

Earth Hour is a campaign for anyone and everyone who wants to share a commitment to make this planet better.

19. What energy/carbon reductions have resulted from Earth Hour in previous years?

Earth Hour does not purport to be an energy/carbon reduction exercise, it is a symbolic action. Therefore, we do not engage in the measurement of energy/carbon reduction levels. Earth Hour is an initiative to encourage individuals, businesses and governments around the world to take accountability for their ecological footprint and engage in dialogue and resource exchange that provides real solutions to our environmental challenges. Participation in Earth Hour symbolises a commitment to change beyond the hour.

20. How can I do more for Earth Hour than just switching off my lights?

Get involved in I Will If You Will – taking actions both big and small makes a difference to our planet, and here’s the opportunity to make a commitment beyond the hour and share that with your communities. Whether it’s daring your network to commit to recycle, switch to energy efficient light bulbs or something much bigger, IWIIYW will help you incentivise action beyond the hour.

21. Aren’t you using a lot of electricity and resources to promote this event?

Earth Hour takes every effort to minimise our footprint, not just for the hour but all year round. The campaign relies heavily on digital platforms to minimise the usage of natural resources, and we endeavour to keep our footprint to a minimum where possible. However, we do not claim nor do we think it is achievable at this time to create awareness and engagement of so many people on environmental issues with zero footprint.

22. Whose idea was Earth Hour?

Earth Hour came from a think tank initiated by Earth Hour Executive Director and Co-Founder, Andy Ridley, resulting in the formation of a partnership between WWF Australia, Leo Burnett and Fairfax Media to address the climate change issue. In 2007, there was still a degree of scepticism and denial about the issue of climate change. Earth Hour came as the inspiration to rally people to the reality of climate change and start a dialogue about what we as individuals can do to help address the greatest problem facing our planet today. Leo Burnett partnered with WWF to promote the idea and help make the campaign a reality in Sydney, a campaign which has now gone beyond climate change to symbolise the growing global pursuit of a better, healthier world.

23. What is Earth Hour’s relationship with WWF? Does WWF own Earth Hour?

WWF co-founded Earth Hour in Sydney in 2007, facilitating Earth Hour’s rapid worldwide growth through its connection to WWF’s global network. With a presence in more than 70 countries, WWF continues to play a valuable partner role, ensuring a solid foundation and support network on which to deliver a truly global environmental message throughout the year.

24. Who are the Earth Hour partners?

Earth Hour began as a WWF-led initiative in Australia in 2007 in partnership with brand co-owners, Fairfax Media and Leo Burnett. All three partners decided from the beginning, however, that expanding Earth Hour’s global reach would require working in partnership with any organisation. Earth Hour’s message has spanned the world with the help of many global organisations. In 2012, Earth Hour’s collaboration with YouTube has been significant in the development of the I Will If You Will campaign.

25. Do you have requirements or regulations about who can or cannot partner with Earth Hour?

Any partner must uphold and support the aims and principles of Earth Hour. These include encouraging individual and community engagement on environmental issues. Encouraging conscious decisions to change the way we live in order to affect environmental reform, without the use of scare tactics or shaming. The specific decisions about whether or not to partner with a group or corporation are
made at local level by Earth Hour country and city teams based on what suits their needs and community in achieving the goals of Earth Hour.

26. Does Earth Hour welcome the support of other NGOs (Non-Government Organisations) and NFP’s (Not for Profits)?

Absolutely. In fact, the success of Earth Hour would not be possible without the support of other NGOs and NFPs. Global organisations such as the World Organisation of the Scout Movement and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts have been pivotal in spreading the Earth Hour message, while in some countries where there is no WWF presence, Earth Hour campaigns are orchestrated entirely by other NGOs and NFPs who share the same non-aggressive, guilt-free approach to addressing environmental issues taken by Earth Hour.

27. Where can we find Earth Hour on social media?

Earth Hour uses social media to drive its campaign. Follow our stories on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Tumblr, Google + and of course, the IWIYW campaign on YouTube.

28. What does the Earth Hour logo mean?

The standard Earth Hour ‘60’ logo represents the 60 minutes of Earth Hour where we focus on the impact we are having on our planet and take positive action to address the environmental issues we face. For Earth Hour 2011 the ‘60+’ logo was introduced representing a commitment to add to Earth Hour a positive act for the planet that goes beyond the hour.

29. What is the Earth Hour City Challenge?

With more than 70% of the world’s CO2 emissions generated by cities, the Earth Hour City Challenge has been created to reward pioneering cities that are leading the way towards a fully sustainable future. See more at EarthHour.org/City Challenge. In 2012, cities throughout Canada, India, Italy, Sweden and the United States will participate in this year’s pilot challenge.

30. How do cities win?

An international jury will review all submissions outlining holistic, inspiring and credible city plans that increase the share of renewables in the city’s energy systems. The Earth Hour City Challenge is not about having the most hi-tech plans or resources; it’s about a commitment to innovative thinking and enacting solutions that create a greener and cleaner city for residents.