

Sustainable Events Guide

- neconomically viable
- 🤝 socially just
- 🤝 environmentally sound





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Introduction

This guide is designed to support event organisers to deliver more sustainable events. A sustainable event is one that shows care for the environment, is economically viable and considers social issues. The goal is to reduce environmental impact, add value to the local economy, engage the wider community and educate those involved.

What does the Guide apply to?

Every event is different, and this Guide can be used by anyone involved in planning and managing events.

The Guide is intended to be considered by any individual or organisation that is holding an event. Events may include, but are not limited to the below:

- Conferences
- Workshops
- Markets
- Outdoor cinemas
- Music festivals
- Community events

What is the Circular Economy?

Shoalhaven Council is committed to transitioning away from a linear approach to consumption, towards a circular one, grounded in three key principles:

- 1. Designing out waste and pollution.
- 2. Reusing products and materials so they can stay at their highest value for as long as possible.
- 3. Protecting and enhancing natural and social systems.

All events are encouraged to follow circular economy principles.

How to use this Guide

The Guide is divided into key sections that outline different aspects of an event. Each section offers suggestions for how to improve the sustainability of your event.

Key sections are:

- 1. Waste reduction and resource recovery
- 2. Energy efficiency and renewable energy
- 3. Transport
- 4. Water management
- 5. Food and catering
- 6. Procurement
- 7. Merchandise and signs
- 8. Measuring, marketing and engagement Planning is essential in making real changes to reduce emissions and water use, limit waste generation and minimise impacts on the environment. Doing it all straight away can be overwhelming. Remember even small changes can have a big impact.

Consider:

- Setting sustainability objectives and deciding what you want to achieve for your event.
- Determining the data you want to collect to measure impact.
- Identifying key actions you are going to put in place.

At the end of the guide there is a list of useful links and resources.

CATEGORY USE

Suggestions to improve the sustainability of your events are divided into 3 categories based on an indicative size of the event.

Category 1: <2000 Category 2: 2000-5000 Category 3: > 5000

The sustainability actions detailed in this document are cumulative and increase with the size of your event. For example, Category 2 events should also consider Category 1 suggestions, and Category 3 events should consider Category 1 and 2 suggestions.

WASTE REDUCTION AND RESOURCE RECOVERY





The best tactic for event organisers is waste avoidance through reducing the need for unnecessary materials and reusing materials where possible.

Guide to the number of bins required at events

Events generate approximately one litre of waste per person, per meal. For example: 1,000 people x 2 meal times = 2,000 litres of estimated event waste. Divide 2,000 by the standard bin (240L) = 8 wheelie bins. This means the event would require 4 x general waste (red) bins and 4 x recycling (yellow) bins. If unsure, a good rule is to include a recycling and general waste bin together every 14 metres in main event areas.

Quick Guide to Recyclable, Biodegradable and Compostable Packaging

Shoalhaven Waste System

Each LGA has its own waste process. The Shoalhaven is moving to an advanced waste processing system, allowing over 90% of waste collected from our bins to be recycled and recovered. Council provides a two-bin service to collect general waste (red-lid bin) and commingled recycling (yellow-lid bin). Through the new processing of the red bin, every recyclable material including organic material such as food and green waste will be recovered. This process means a Green Bin is not needed by organisers in the Shoalhaven. You can find out more about the two-bin system **here.**

Recyclable

Items that can be recycled include all empty hard plastic drink bottles and containers, aluminum cans and glass bottles, paper and flattened cardboard, trays and clean foil, milk and juice cartons, and rigid plastic containers. Always remember to empty recycling into the bin loose. Plastic bags and soft plastics are not suitable for recycling bins. For a full list of recyclable items visit our **recycling guide.**

Biodegradable and Bioplastics

Biodegradable plastic refers to plastics made from treated petrochemicals. Basically, biodegradable bags break down quicker than traditional plastic bags into smaller plastic pieces and hence can only be put in landfill bins. Bioplastic refers to plastics made from renewable feedstocks, such as wood, corn, soy, sugar cane, and grasses and are often compostable. Bioplastics are best suited for products that are often thrown away with food and other organic materials.



- Develop a waste management plan so you can identify the waste streams that will be generated at your event, and the number of bins required.
- Select the appropriate recycling services. Ask yourself, are there options to eliminate problematic materials at the planning stage? Can you hire items instead of buying them?
- Recycling bins should be provided at a minimum in addition to landfill garbage bins, and should be Australian Standard coloured bins: mixed recycling – yellow, waste to landfill – red.
- Waste stations should have adequate signage and indicate what goes in each bin.
- Create a site plan for bin placement throughout the event site.
- Ensure adequate emptying and cleaning of bins throughout the event.

- Do not utilise single use plastic items l.e. straws, plastic bags, coffee cups, stirrers, food containers, cutlery, balloons, confetti, and giveaways.
- No polystyrene of any kind should be used, this includes but is not limited to food containers and packaging.
- Cups / plates / food containers should be recyclable or reusable.
- Single use plastic cutlery can be replaced with FSC certified wooden cutlery.
- Promote your event as Waste Wise and Single Use Plastic Free.
- Ensure that the site is left clean at the end of the event.

CATEGORY 2 events 2000 - 5000

- Trained bin monitors are recommended to minimise waste contamination and should be at each waste station.
- Ensure stallholders are aware of the events intention to reduce waste and are well equipped with the right information to do so.
- Check stallholders are using the correct products and no single use plastics are being used during the event.
- Collect basic waste information such as kg waste recycled and sent to landfill, with the aim to improve sustainable waste outcomes and resource recovery in future events.

- Add extra cost to single use items to encourage reusable items or offer a discount for people with a reusable cup.
- Provide or sell reusable bottles or cups and provide access to water stations throughout events.
- Consider the following when reviewing event outcomes and make sure to include data collection requirements in waste supplier contracts: Recycling and general waste composition. Signage and education. Future procurement decisions regarding types of waste. Contamination and the acceptability of recycling services.

Alternative Product Suggestions

Product	Suggestions
DRINK CUPS	 Attendees BYO bottle Certified compostable cups AS 4736 White PET recyclable coffee cup
COFFEE CUPS	 Attendees BYO reusable coffee cup Certified compostable cups AS 4736 Use white or black PLA (bioplastic) lids that are certified compostable AS 4736 Use white PET recyclable coffee cups
CONTAINERS, PLATES & BOWLS	 Use plastic containers that can be recycled Use cardboard/paper bowls and plates AS 4736 Use compostable containers these are usually made from bamboo or sugarcane AS 4736 considering a returner station where reusable containers can be returned to be cleaned and reused
CULTERY	 Use FSC certified wooden cutlery Use bioplastic cutlery that is AS 4736 compostable
STRAWS	 No straws automatically provided Use FSC certified paper straws Sell metal straws





Waste Reduction And Resource

Recovery



Develop a waste management plan to identify waste streams and the appropriate recycling or composting services you require



Provide Red and Yellow lid bins as per the Shoalhaven's two bin system



No single use plastics should be used such as food containers, cups, straws, cutlery, bags and balloons

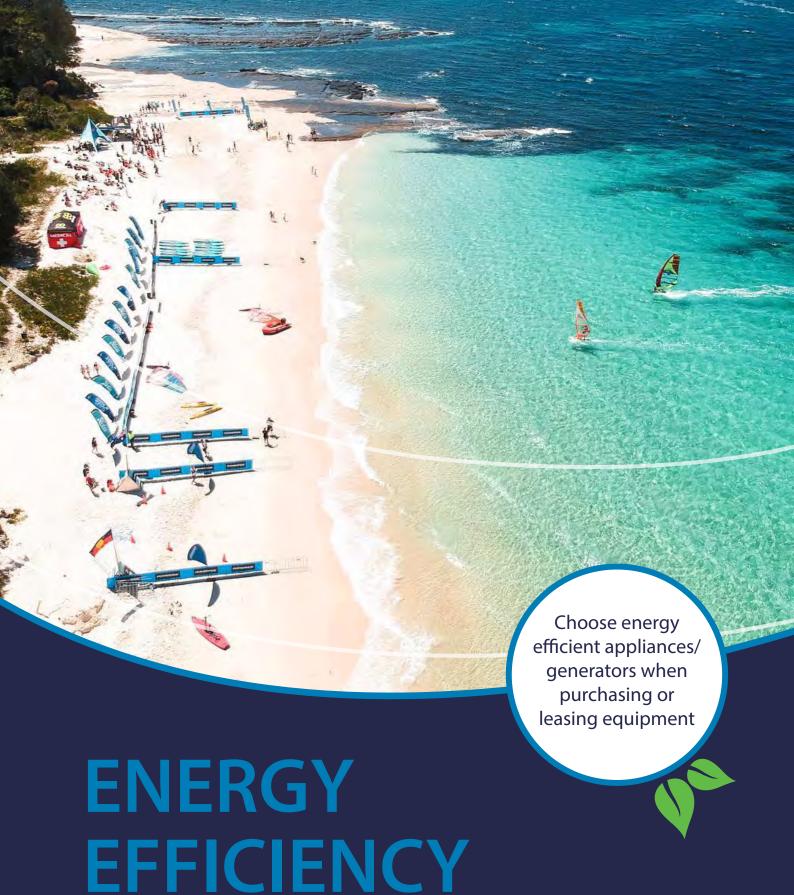


Add extra cost to single use items to encourage reusable items, offer a discount for people with a reusable cup or sell resusable items

Promote your event as 'waste wise' so people know to bring their own water bottles, coffee cups and reusable bags

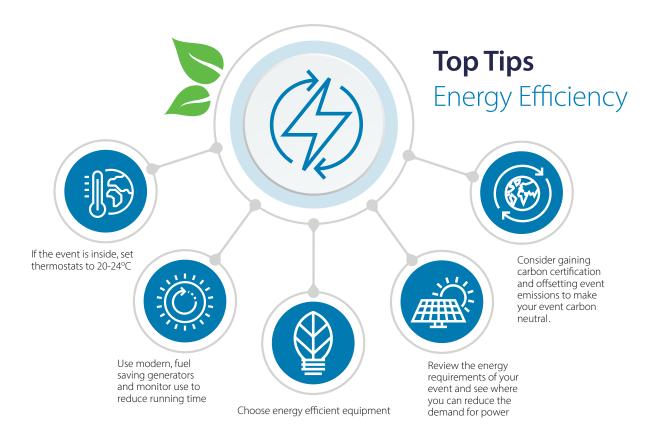


Recycling and waste bins should be provided together and no more than 14 metres apart in main event areas.



Reducing energy use not only saves money, it also increases energy security, and reduces the pollution that is emitted from non-renewable sources of energy. It is important to consider how your event can reduce energy use and shift away from fossil fuels where possible.

Council has power available at each of their event sites and facilities. Use of Council's power may incur additional fees. It is important when preparing your site plan that you are aware of Council's power connection locations so that you can plan accordingly.



- Review the energy requirements of the event and see where you can reduce the demand for power. If you have individual stallholders at your event you will need to know their energy requirements.
- Choose energy efficient appliances when purchasing or leasing new equipment and appliances, including LED lighting.
- Use modern, fuel saving generators and monitor use to reduce running time.
- If the event is inside, set thermostats within a 20-24°C range depending on the season.
- Manage and monitor lighting or equipment to ensure that the use is optimal including use of timers and turning off equipment when not required and at the end of the event. Utilise solar lights where appropriate e.g. portable lights and festoon lighting.

CATEGORY 2 events 2000 - 5000

- Use energy efficient lighting (eg LED) and audio visual equipment where possible. Diffuse lighting and sound where possible to minimise impact to neighbours and the local community.
- Provide the opportunity for stakeholders to offset their energy use.
- Communicate energy objectives early to suppliers and stallholders. Energy requirements could also be written into supplier or stallholder agreements, for example:
 - Utilising energy efficient equipment and appliances that have a high Energy Rating label.

- Minimising the use of diesel generators and locate generators away from food, gathering or high foot traffic areas (to reduce noise and reduce pollution).
- Minimising equipment idling, encouraging or supporting fuel substitution and/or storage (i.e. biodiesels and batteries).
- Ensuring appropriate equipment placement to allow airflow, considering air quality and efficient use of natural light/shading where appropriate.
- Educate the community on energy efficiency with signage.

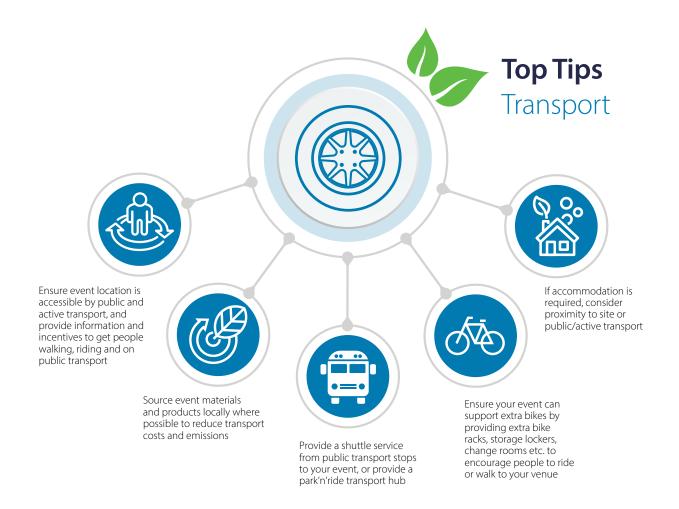
- Collect energy data and calculate greenhouse gas emissions generated.
- Consider gaining carbon certification and offsetting event emissions (i.e. through tree planting programs) to make your event carbon neutral.

TRANSPORT

Transport is one of the more difficult impacts for event organisers to have influence over. Transport to and from events by attendees, performers and staff, as well as freight to move materials to and from a site, are significant sources of emissions.

Event Organisers can encourage car sharing, public and active transport (i.e. cycling and walking). Public and Active transport should be encouraged wherever possible.





- Encourage and promote sustainable transport options, ensuring maps, timetable information and travel times are shared and available online.
- Depending on the size of your event, provide extra bike racks, storage lockers, change rooms etc. to encourage people to ride or walk to your venue.

CATEGORY 2 events 2000 - 5000

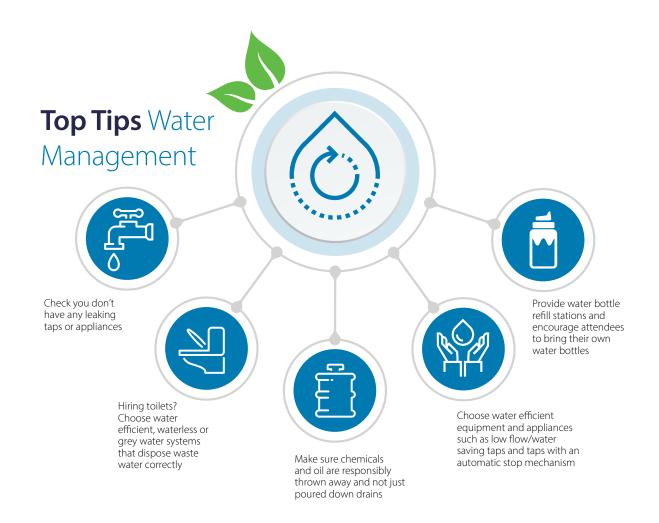
- Provide a 'park n' ride' transport hub within 5km radius of your event.
- Offer promotional codes or incentives attached to people using ride share and active transport.
- Document opportunities and learnings for the next event, tracking progress.
- Source locally, to reduce freight and logistics (i.e. performers, staff, suppliers, food, materials).
- Consider access to electric vehicle charging stations in the venue selection process. NSW EV Charging map can be found here

- Provide a shuttle bus from public transport hubs.
- For large sites or multiple locations, provide sustainable travel options between locations.
- Utilise sustainable transportation methods for goods and materials to/from site i.e. electric and/or hybrid cars.
- If accommodation is required, consider proximity to site or public/active transport.
- Provide an opportunity for attendees to utilise travel offsets (encourage at booking).
- Evaluate greenhouse gas emissions from attendee and participant travel. Depending on the event, this data could be collected by a simple survey as people enter the event.
- Consider gaining carbon certification and offsetting event emissions (i.e. through tree planting programs) to make your event carbon neutral.
- Promote, celebrate and share stories of sustainable transport outcomes with the community, site and networks, thanking and acknowledging efforts.



WATER MANAGEMENT

Connection to a mains (drinking) water supply is provided to most events and is used for drinking, food preparation, washing up and sanitisation. Chemical free wastewater should also be a goal of a sustainable event and ensure there is no contamination of waterways from event activities.



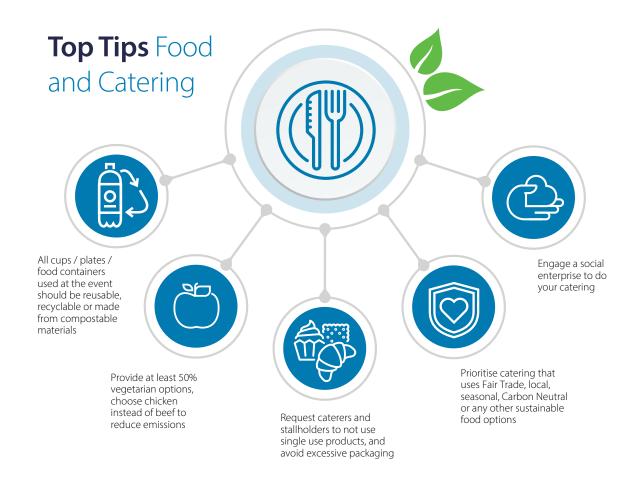
- Check you don't have any leaking taps or appliances.
- Choose water efficient appliances and fixtures when purchasing or leasing water related equipment and appliances (i.e. low flow/water saving taps and taps with an automatic stop mechanism).
- Provide accessible water to event goer, such as hiring portable water bottle refill stations or a water refill trailer.
- Encourage and promote attendees to bring their own water bottles so they don't need to buy bottled water.
- For inside venues provide water stations with jugs of water and glasses for delegates.
- Make sure chemicals and oil are responsibly disposed of by stallholders and not poured down drains.
- Choose a hired toilet provider that is either water efficient, compostable, waterless or uses 'grey water'.

CATEGORY 2 events 2000 - 5000 **CATEGORY 3** events >5000 Provide staff with reusable bottles (or ask them For large outdoor events use hand-held misting to bring their own) and provide or sell reusable sprays, not constantly running misting stations bottles or cups to your attendees for use across for cooling attendees down. your event.

FOOD AND CATERING

Australian consumers throw away around 3.1 million tonnes of food - that's close to 17,000 grounded 747 jumbo jets. Another 2.2 million tonnes is disposed of by the commercial and industrial sector. When food waste is sent to landfill, it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. The impact of food waste also includes the energy, fuel and water used to grow food that may not be used. As most people consume food purchased from a retailer, the energy and fuel usage extends (but is not limited to) transportation, refrigeration and packaging. Selecting local and sustainable catering options and reducing food waste can significantly improve the sustainability of your event - helping to save resources and reduce emissions.





- Encourage your caterer or stallholders to address the following areas in developing their menu:
 - Encourage locally grown, seasonal produce where possible. Generally, the further food has to travel to your plate the more greenhouse gas emissions and pollution it produces in transport and storage. See Illawarra's guide to buying sustainable and ethically produced food at foodfairnessillawarra.org.au
 - Encourage organic food where possible.
 - Encourage stallholders / caterers to offer vegetarian and/or vegan options.

- Encourage sustainable seafood. Refer to the Sustainable Seafood Guide to choose wisely.
- Encourage prioritisation of suppliers that are Fairtrade.
- Engage a social enterprise to do your catering.
- No single use plastics to be used.
- All cups / plates / food containers used at the event should be reusable or recyclable.
- For conferences- If you have excess food, partner with an organisation that collects leftover food and redistributes it to people in need.

CATEGORY 2 events 2000 - 5000

- Via contract, specify that no single use plastic items such as cups, straws, plastic bags, stirrers, containers or cutlery are to be used.
- All cups / plates / food containers used at the event must be reusable, recyclable or made from compostable materials.
- Compost/organise for your food waste to be picked up and sent to an organic collection supplier.

CATEGORY 3 events >5000

• Add extra cost to single use items to encourage reusable items and/ or provide or sell reusable bottles or cups to your attendees for use across your event

PROCUREMENT



Event managers and stallholders can play a significant role in making informed choices throughout the supply chain. These procurement choices can influence the wider industry, promoting new technology and products that are more environmentally responsible, ethical and with local economy benefits.

The concept of a circular economy means that materials are kept in circulation longer, waste is minimised, and material reuse is maximised, for the benefit of the local economy. All suggested actions need to be taken in the planning stages of your event. The first step for event organisers is to develop a simple Sustainable Procurement Policy that clearly states sustainable purchasing objectives and intentions.

CATEGORY 1 events < 2000

- Communicate with suppliers the sustainability objectives of the event and develop a 'preferred products' list with consumables suppliers.
- Purchase locally made products (low carbon miles).
- Support sharing goods and services (hiring or leasing), rather than buying.

CATEGORY 2 events 2000 - 5000

- Include tailored specific sustainability requirement in contracts or agreements (e.g. no single use plastics to be used).
- Purchase items that are made out of recycled material, are recyclable, reusable or have a guarantee that they are made to last.

- Purchase products with an environmental or social certification, such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Rainforest Alliance, Australian Organic, Fairtrade or Carbon Neutral.
- Work with suppliers to incorporate circular economy principles to determine how event materials can be used for multiple events and reused at end of life.
- Check the companies you purchase from have a clear understanding of their supply chain – where things come from and how they are made, including awareness of key environmental and social risks their products may be contributing to.

MERCHANDISE & SIGNAGE

Merchandise, giveaways and printed materials have an impact on resource use, manufacturing and transport emissions, toxicity and waste.

CATEGORY 1 events < 2000

- Minimise printed promotional materials. Use electronic event communication tools such as QR Codes, e-invites, online maps, programs and agendas.
- If print materials are essential, ensure they are double sided, Forest Stewardship Council certified and on 100% recycled or carbon neutral paper.
- Avoid showbags, balloons and non-sustainable giveaways from sponsors and vendors.
- Design signs and banners to be reusable, such as avoiding dates or themes that require year on year new printing.
- Request recycled, PVC free or other sustainable options when printing signs.
- Avoid single use and non-sustainable giveaways.

CATEGORY 2 & 3 events > 2000

• Ensure vendors and sponsors adhere to sustainability requirements regarding printed materials.



MEASURING, MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT

A truly sustainable event results in additional benefits to staff, stallholders, suppliers and attendees alike. Gaining commitment from others will maximise the overall benefits. With accurate monitoring and measurement of sustainability actions, events can confidently evaluate their performance, reflect on achievements, and continue their sustainability journey year-on-year.

These suggestions are more suitable to medium and large sized events, but even a small event can communicate sustainability initiatives and achievements.

CATEGORY 1 events < 2000

• If your event is Waste Wise and Single Use Plastic Free, promote these initiatives when advertising your event.

CATEGORY 2 events 2000 - 5000

- Clearly and consistently communicate your environmental commitments pre, during, and post event. A good way to achieve this is through a detailed Communication and Engagement Plan.
- Actively engage and educate the community by showcasing your sustainability credentials and initiatives through pre/post event messaging.
- Collect basic data on energy, waste and water use to identify where improvements can be made next time.

- Establish a system to monitor energy, waste, transport and water data (see Appendix 2). This will help identify future opportunities to enhance your events sustainability and allow you to create tangible sustainability objectives.
- Collaborate with sponsors, suppliers, stallholders, performers, event attendees, staff, venue owners to find value and stories in what you are doing and promote it.
- Prominently display sustainability initiatives in key congregation and viewing areas such as adjacent to stalls, toilets, stages and bin clusters to raise awareness, communicate objectives and achieve behaviour change.

APPENDIX 1

Useful Information and Links

Sustainable Products

Sustainable Choice: Igp.org.au/sustainable-choice (need to be a member)

Eco Business Directory: greenfinder.com.au

Fair Trade: fta.org.au

Food Fairness Illawarra: foodfairnessillawarra.org.au Forest Stewardship Council: au.fsc.org/en-au Rainforest Alliance: rainforest-alliance.org Australian organic: austorganic.com

Indigenous Business search: supplynation.org.au

Resources and supplier databases specifically targeted at the sustainable events industry:

thrive.sustainable-event-alliance.org **Eco and green products:** ecobuy.org.au

Plastic free resources and information, including product supplier information: byebyeplastic.org.au

Waste

EPA – event recycling: epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/recycling-and-reuse/businessgovernment-recycling/waste-wise-events/public-places-and-events

Recycling near you: recyclingnearyou.com.au

Visy Recycling: visy.com.au/recycling

Green Connect (event waste management): green-connect.com.au

Closed Loop: closedloop.com.au **Cleanaway:** cleanaway.com.au

Veolia: veolia.com/anz/contact-us/our-locations

Soilco: soilco.com.au/services/organics

Energy

Energy Efficiency: environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/energy

Carbon offsetting: environment.gov.au/climate-change/government/carbon-neutral/ncos-eligibleoffsets

Transport

Transport NSW Information: transportnsw.info

GoGet: goget.com.au

Bicycle NSW: bicyclensw.org.au **Bike rack hire:** bikerackhire.com.au

Water

Shoalwater: shoalwater.nsw.gov.au/about-us

Food

Slow Food South Coast: slowfoodsouthcoast.org.au

Sustainable Food: choosewisely.org.au

Good fish Guide: Sustainable seafood guide: goodfish.org.au

Calculating the Carbon Footprint of your event and offsetting

Carbon neutral: carbonneutral.com.au/carbon-calculator Carbon neutral charitable fund: cncf.com.au/carbon-calculator Greening Australia: greeningaustralia.org.au/carbon-offsetting

Climate Clever: climateclever.org/business?partner=shoalhavencitycouncil

APPENDIX 2

Ways to Measure Performance

With accurate monitoring and measurement of sustainability actions, events can confidently reflect their achievements, substantiate any public statements or assist make their event carbon neutral. It will also help highlight any areas that can be improved for your next event.

Firstly, you need to ascertain what information you want to gather to monitor and improve the sustainability of future events, who will collect the data and if you need a budget to do so. It is imperative in the planning stages of your event you recognise what data needs to be collected.

Below are examples of the type of information and data that could be collected. Depending on your event type and size only certain examples will be suitable, and it is acknowledged that extra resources would be required to collect some of the data (e.g. transport data).

Waste reduction and resource recovery

- Kg of landfill / person
- Kg drink recycling (cans/bottles) / person
- Kg food waste to landfill / person
- Kg food waste to compost / person

Energy efficiency

- Electricity consumption: kWh / person
- Gas consumption: MJ / person
- Generator fuel consumption: diesel/biodiesel L / person

Transport

- Percentage / number of attendees who drove to the event alone/with someone
- Percentage / number of attendees who took public transport to the event
- Percentage / number of attendees who took active transport (cycled, walked)

Water

Water consumption kL / person

Food

Meat vs vegetarian meals: \$ and %

Procurement

- % products that are recycled, recyclable or reusable
- % products locally made





References

- City of Wollongong, Sustainable Event Guide
- City of Adelaide, Sustainable Event Guidelines 2018
- City of Sydney, Sustainable Events Guide 2020
- City of Melbourne, Sustainable Events Guide, viewed 21st April 2021 https: melbourne.vic. gov.au/business/sustainable-business/sustainable-event-guide/Pages/sustainable-event-guide.aspx
- City of Moonee Valley, Sustainable Events Toolkit
- Food Fairness Illawarra and Healthy Cities Illawarra, Illawarra's Guide to Sustainable and Healthy Events 2020
- Hawkesbury City Council, Sustainable Events Management Guide 2011
- Hume City Council, Sustainable Events Guidelines 2019.
- Macquarie University, A Guide to hosting Sustainable Events
- Mosman Council, Guide to Sustainable Events Management
- NSW Department of Environment and Conservation 2007, Waste Wise Event Guide
- Shellharbour City Council, Sustainable Events Policy 2011



Address all correspondence to: **The Chief Executive Officer** PO Box 42, Nowra NSW 2541

shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/contact 1300 293 111

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