



RESPONSIBLE EVENT PLAN

There really are valuable benefits to improving your event's sustainability.

Embedding environmental and social responsibility into your event is not only the right thing to do, but also on trend and appealing to the event attendees – and can save you money!

It feels great to use an event to make a positive impact, and multiply that impact by being a role model for others.

This template will help you get started on your sustainability journey. You can identify 2-3 easy wins to do this year, and build on your success with 2-3 additions next year.

You can spend the time to consider your event holistically, and plan actions for a few years, to be implemented in stages.

For a deeper dive, you can embed environmental, social and economic sustainability into your event culture, and integrate it into your event planning.

Measurable Progress: SMART Targets

Be sure to set SMART targets for improvements; that is targets that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound (i.e. that identify when the measurable target will be achieved by).

Achievable actions are important when you're getting started on your sustainability journey, so you feel encouraged by your wins.

An example might be, 'We will reduce waste to landfill from our next event by 20%.'

- Specific: The goal is about the amount of waste to landfill.
- Measurable: Number of bins (or tons if your waste partner measures weight).
- Achievable: 20% could be achievable with the right tactics, such as having volunteers stationed at bins to help attendees choose to use your recycling and composting bins.
- Realistic: The tactic of using a volunteer costs no extra, so that the event can afford to implement it.
- Timebound: The next event held (i.e. the timing is the dates of the event).

Commitment

Publicly making a commitment helps get everyone involved in your event on board, and provides a clear message to your stakeholders about what you stand for, and helps set expectations for those you work with.

We commit to uphold [name of your event]'s approach to sustainability through the actions outlined in this checklist.

Event:

Name:

Position:

Signed:

Date:

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Emissions

Objective: Reduce emissions from the event.

Target: [Insert SMART target]

It can be tricky to set a measurable target as emissions are not easy to measure, but you can use other emissions-reducing targets that can be measured, such as

- a reduction in flights and numbers of cars used by attendees (transport is the source of the vast majority of event-related emissions)
- a reduction in waste to landfill
- an increase in composting
- a reduction in fossil fuel energy use
- an increase in vegetarian meals sold.

Key performance indicators:

[Insert KPIs]

An example is:

- Reducing cars used by attendees from 1,000 cars to 800. (Your action to achieve this might be incentivising carpooling or use of public and active transport options.).

Tips

- The areas where your event can make the biggest reductions in emissions are in your choices around transport, energy, and food. The rest of this document contains numerous ideas on how to reduce emissions from these three.
- Remember to estimate and offset emissions that can't be reduced. An example of a carbon offset company is the Australian forest planting company, [GreenFleet](#). You might want to provide attendees with a link to purchase transport carbon offsets on your ticket sales page.
- Orange F.O.O.D. Week is a regional festival that rigorously measured its emissions. Prior to trying to reduce the event's emissions, their event was producing 0.04 tons of greenhouse gases (tCO₂e) per attendee. This might help you estimate your event's emissions. 98% of their event's emissions came from transport sources. [Read their sustainability report](#).
- Consider not providing social licence to sponsors and partners whose products aren't environmentally-responsible or climate-smart, such as fossil fuel energy providers and beef producers.

Fill out the following table with the actions that you will do to reduce emissions. You might find that the actions in this table come out of actions further down in this template.

Actions required to achieve emissions target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year:

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Venue

Objective: Use venues that support sustainable practices.

The following checklist can help guide conversations with managers of potential venues to learn more about the venue's sustainability. You can compare a couple of venue options by filling out a checklist for each.

Hiring a venue that is sustainable and supports sustainable choices (such as recycling) can make your job much easier!

Sustainable Venue Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
Energy			
Is the venue powered by renewable energy?			
Does the venue have insulation, passive ventilation, and energy-efficient lighting, heating/cooling, and equipment?			
Water			
Is there a drinking water source available for people to fill their bottles?			
Does the venue have water-efficient appliances?			
Does the venue use its own rainwater?			
Does the venue re-use greywater?			
Purchasing habits			
Does the venue provide vegetarian, plant-based, local, and seasonal catering options?			
Does the venue use reusable or compostable items instead of single use plastic?			
Does the venue use sustainable supplies, such as cleaning products?			
Waste and resource recovery			
Does the venue implement policies that minimise consumption and waste?			
Does the venue provide recycling facilities?			
Does the venue use reusable containers?			
Does the venue reduce paper printing (e.g. marketing materials and tickets) and single use decorative items?			
Does the venue use upcycled or recycled products and materials?			
Does the venue donate food that isn't eaten, or compost its food waste?			
Transport			
Does the venue have bicycle parking facilities?			
Is the venue easily accessible by public transport (within 300 metres)?			

Is the venue accessible for people with disability, including for transport to the venue?			
Measurement and reporting			
Can the venue provide environmental performance data?			
Is the venue carbon neutral?			
Total			

Actions to improve venue sustainability	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year:

Transport

Objective: Reduce use of fossil-fuel powered transport options by increasing the use of public and active transport options. (Active transport refers to walking, cycling, using a scooter, and similar modes of transport).

Target: [Insert SMART target]

Key performance indicators:

[Insert KPIs]

Examples include:

- Percentage or number of attendees who used public or active transport
- Percentage or number of attendees who drove to the event alone or with a full car

Tips:

- Provide remote and virtual attendance options.
- Provide information on walking, cycling and public transport routes to your event.
- Offer incentives to your attendees to use climate-smart transport options, including car-pooling. For example, free coffee or entry to win a prize, or organise free public transport for ticketholders.
- Provide a shuttle service from key public transport stops to your event.
- Ensure there's adequate infrastructure to support bike use and parking.
- If your event is at multiple venues, set up a bike or scooter share to help attendees to travel between them.
- Link to a carbon offsetting service on your website and ticketing website to encourage attendees to carbon offset their trip to your event.

Actions required to achieve target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year:

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Energy

Objective: Reduce use of fossil fuels through increased energy efficiency, and choosing renewable energy.

Target: [Insert SMART target]

Key performance indicators:

[Insert KPIs]

Examples include:

- Electricity consumption from non-renewable sources: kWh of electricity / person
- Gas consumption: MJ of gas / person
- Generator fuel consumption: L of diesel / person

Tips:

- Choose a venue that buys renewable energy, or purchase renewable energy from your provider.
- Use energy-efficient electric appliances.

Actions required to achieve target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year:

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Food

Objective: Reduce the environmental impact of food and drinks.

Target: [Insert SMART target]

Key performance indicators:

[Insert KPIs]

Examples include:

- Plant-based vs animal-based meals: \$ & %
- Left-over food donated: kg
- Products with a certification: %

Tips:

- Provide a significant portion of total food options as plant-based and locally-produced (animal agriculture is emissions-intensive and is a significant cause of environmental destruction and climate change. Plant-based options are significantly better for the environment and climate than those that are locally produced but not plant-based).
- Prioritise catering that provides plant-based, Fair Trade, local, seasonal, Carbon Neutral and other sustainable options.
- Reduce food waste by more accurately estimating attendee numbers when planning.
- Stipulate that caterers must avoid single use products and only use compostable and recyclable food containers and cutlery, and avoid products with excessive packaging (for example, swap single-serve sauce packets for a condiment station).
- Provide or sell re-usable bottles and cups to attendees and volunteers for use across your event, and provide a source of drinking water for refilling bottles.
- Partner with an organisation that collects leftover food and redistributes it to people in need, or send food waste to a compost facility.
- Engage a social enterprise for catering to increase the social benefit from your event.

Actions required to achieve target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year:

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Waste

Objective: Reduce waste going to landfill.

Target/s: [Insert SMART target]

Key performance indicators:

[Insert KPIs]

Examples include:

- Kg of landfill / attendee (or m2)
- Kg of recycling / attendee
- Drink container recycling (cans/bottles) / attendee
- Kg food waste to landfill / attendee
- Kg food waste to compost / attendee
- Kg food leftovers / attendee donated

Tips:

- Minimise the amount of waste generated by following the waste hierarchy, 'avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle' before, during and after your event. Recycling shouldn't be your first waste reduction solution as it requires a lot of energy.
- Use digital (paperless) tickets, maps, programs and schedules. You can use on-site QR codes to direct attendees to your online site map and program.
- Provide recycling and organic waste collection bins. Use friendly 'waste warrior' educational volunteers and visual signs on bins to help attendees use bins correctly.
- Avoid single use waste as much as possible, including in merchandise and giveaways. If you can't reuse it, refuse to buy it.
- Use signs that can be reused, such as with new date stickers each year. Use chalkboards to change a message without discarding the sign. Keep signage generic so it can be reused. For example, use phrases such as "this way" or simply use arrows.
- Avoid varnishes and glazes on printed materials that prohibit recycling.
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- Reward attendees for bringing reusable cups, bags and bottles, such as with discounts or opportunities to enter competitions.
- Provide drinking fountains so attendees don't need to buy bottled water in plastic bottles or single use cups.

- Add an extra cost to single use items (if they can't be avoided) to encourage reusable items. For example, make coffees/alcoholic beverages \$1 extra in takeaway cups.
- Make it part of your waste contractor's contract to reduce waste to landfill, and report on waste minimisation achievements.

Actions required to achieve target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year:

Purchasing

Objective: Reduce the environmental impacts of products used at the event.

Target: [Insert SMART target]

Key performance indicators:

[Insert KPIs]

Examples include:

- Percentage of products that are recycled, recyclable or reusable
- Percentage of products locally made
- Percentage of products with an environmental certification

Tips:

- Set minimum standards for purchasing and a cost differential allowance (e.g. allow up to 10% more spend for a more sustainable alternative).
- Purchase items that are made out of recycled materials, are recyclable, re-usable or have a guarantee they are made to last.
- Purchase locally made products with low carbon miles.
- Avoid products with excessive packaging, or buy in bulk (for example, swap single-serve packaged products with loose or bulk packaged items).
- Purchase products with an environmental or social certification (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Fair Trade, Carbon Neutral, or Australian Made).
- Share goods and services (e.g. hire equipment), rather than buy.
- Hire local entertainers and local suppliers.
- Offer experiences rather than products. For example, for prizes, instead of products, make a donation in the winner's name to a local charity.
- Sell responsible merchandise, such as reusable water bottles and organic hemp shirts.
- Use natural materials for kids' crafts.
- If you're nervous about added costs, consider testing the waters with green choices for participants to buy into, i.e. crowdfund your initiatives.

Actions required to achieve target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year:

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Water

Objective: Use water efficiently

Target: [Insert SMART target]

Key performance indicators:

[Insert KPIs]

An example is:

- Water consumption: L / person

Tips:

- Choose water-efficient appliances when leasing water-related equipment.
- Choose a toilet provider that is water efficient, waterless, or re-uses greywater.

Actions required to achieve target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year:

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Social Responsibility

Objective:

Target: [Insert SMART target]

Key performance indicators:

[Insert KPIs]

Examples include:

- Quantity/percentage of local businesses supported by event
- Amount donated to or fundraised by local community groups and charities
- Amount of positive feedback or Net Promoter Score by local residents (NPS is measured by asking 'Would you recommend the event to others?' on a score of 1-5)
- Percentage of performers who are diverse

Tips:

- Make a public statement of commitment to provide a clear message to your stakeholders about what you stand for to increase awareness of environmental, social and economic sustainability; drive sustainable choices; and demonstrate your innovation and leadership.
- Promote your commitment so socially responsible companies can find you to partner with you. Don't partner with sponsors that don't have a culture of supporting diversity.
- Support local businesses, businesses owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, not-for-profits, and socially responsible organisations.
- Encourage community groups to become involved in your event such as to collect Containers for Change, or to create an ongoing legacy for the community, such as in the form of philanthropic or volunteer projects.
- Use diverse entertainers, MCs and models in marketing (female, gender diverse, different cultures, LGBTIQ, people with disability, old and young, etc). Have targets for diversity in participation e.g. number of female or first time competitors.
- Partner with a socially conscious charity to fundraise for their cause.
- Event organisers have a legal and moral obligation to ensure their experience can be equally enjoyed by all, so ensure your event is accessible for people with disability, including mobility, sight, sound and neurological disability. For example, provide step-free access, hearing loops, live captioning, large print text, audio versions, and use clear simple language.
- Provide catering choices that meet attendees' needs for culturally appropriate, healthy, nutritious food and beverages, including specific dietary options.
- Work to reduce noise, traffic, and disturbances for neighbours.

Actions required to achieve target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Actions required to achieve target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year:

Communication and Partnerships

Objective:

Target: [Insert SMART target]

Key performance indicators:

[Insert KPIs]

Examples include

- Increase accessibility of the event

Tips:

- Develop a sustainability policy for your event and publish it on your website, including a statement of your vision, values, commitments, and SMART goals.
- Widely share your sustainability message to artists, venues, suppliers, staff, crew, volunteers and attendees through program, signage, video, social media, and MC announcements. Promote the benefits of your sustainable choices to your stakeholders and attendees.
- Work with suppliers, caterers, venues, entertainers, stallholders and sponsors who share your vision to create a sustainable event. Ask your suppliers to provide suggestions based on their expertise.
- Promote your stance so green and socially responsible companies can find you to partner with you. Brands are looking to distinguish themselves from competitors by demonstrating their social and environmental credentials. Consider developing sponsorship packages with partners who can provide or fund sustainability options. This works particularly well where you can find a sponsor whose values, services and products align with an experience you want to create that is visible to attendees.
- Ask sponsors to communicate their green credentials at your event.
- Don't partner with carbon-intensive sponsors such as fossil fuel companies.

- Provide opportunities for event organisers and stakeholders to be educated on how to be more sustainable, and participate in sustainable practices.
- Consider a small opt-in donation when selling tickets to raise funds for sustainability infrastructure that supports your green goals.
- Promote sustainable behaviours (e.g. active and public transport, BYO refillable water bottle and coffee cup, and reusable bag).
- Show backstage footage of your employees or give an inside look to your event production and how you are implementing your green choices.

Actions required to achieve target/s	Responsible person	Target completion date	Results

Initiatives we will improve on, and add, next year, based on learnings from this year: