



06

Sustainable events

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Events present an important opportunity to manage our impact on the environment, grow markets for sustainable products and services, and showcase good environmental practice to the community. Sustainable events can also offer an enhanced experience for participants and deliver financial savings.

Increasingly the events community is having to demonstrate its sustainability credentials to clients, customers and the community – adhering to best environmental practices. All event organisers have the opportunity to consider, understand and minimise their impact on the environment.

Taking steps to improve an event’s sustainability can also support local and sustainability-focused products and services, further driving this sector’s development in alignment with the [Building a resilient tourism industry: Queensland tourism climate change response plan](#). Reducing resource use, including energy and water, and producing less waste, can also play a role in reducing overall event delivery costs and enhance business resilience.

Whether you are planning a small or large-scale event, there are steps that you can take to improve sustainability – many of which are simple and inexpensive.

There are three core considerations to help deliver a more sustainable event:

1. Understanding and managing the event’s environmental impact,
2. Sourcing environmentally and socially responsible products and services,
3. Engaging and communicating with communities.



Whitsunday Clipper Race Carnival

Three core themes

Understanding and managing the event’s environmental impact

- Encourage public, active and **greener transport** options,
- Avoid the generation of unnecessary waste and **minimise waste** to landfill by using **reusable** or recyclable products and making sure that the event has the appropriate waste collection and **recycling** bins,
- Reduce **energy** and **water** consumption to save resources and emissions.

Sourcing environmentally and socially responsible products and services

- Provide and encourage sustainable **food and beverage** practices,
- Choose a **venue** that supports **good sustainability practices**,
- **Purchase sustainably** and manage your supply chain responsibly.

Engaging and communicating with communities

- **Communicate** sustainability efforts,
- Promote **inclusion** and **accessibility** by welcoming the whole community (regardless of gender, age, ability, race, orientation, socio-economic status, cultural background or political affiliations) and ensuring that the event is accessible,
- Promote a **healthy, safe** and **secure** event.

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Understanding and managing the event's environmental impact

Understand the environmental impact on your event, and the opportunities to reduce this impact through choices that can also enhance the event's overall experience.

It is possible to improve the overall event experience and improve environmental outcomes simply by considering transport planning, waste and recycling options, and energy and water use. These options can also deliver financial benefits and savings to event organisers and attendees.

Transport

Encourage public, active and greener modes of transport to and from events.

Public and active transport should be heavily promoted as the main means of accessing the event. Encourage attendees to use these modes of transport when attending your events and activities.

Key considerations for suppliers, attendees and staff include:

- Highlight accessible, active and public transport routes, providing details in your event invitation or ticket details,

- Providing incentives to attendees to make sustainable travel choices e.g. cheap, affordable and rapid shuttle services between key centres of activity,
- Consider charging high parking prices and limiting supply of car parking to manage and reduce car travel,
- Consider incorporating the cost of bus services into the ticket price,
- Provisions for kiss and ride, park and ride, taxi and booked-hire facilities,
- Provide bus/coach/shuttle drop off and storage facilities,
- Maximise use of shared transport, where it is not practical or safe to use public or active transport,
- Minimise travel time and number of journeys required,
- Identify safe travel routes available for night-time events with an appropriate transport service in place,
- Provide parking facilities for bikes, including, if practical, lockers or temporary showers,
- Use and encourage hybrid or electric vehicles where possible,

- Choose local accommodation options within walking distance to the event,
- Depending on the size of an event, you may require an Event Traffic Management Plan.

Understand the environmental impact on your event, and the opportunities to reduce this impact through choices that can also enhance the event's overall experience.

Waste Management and Recycling

Avoid unnecessary generation of waste and ensure more of the waste is recyclable through innovative waste management practices and adopt the Resource Recovery Hierarchy (Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Dispose).

Events can produce large quantities of waste. Careful planning can assist in avoiding much of this waste. Event organisers should demonstrate environmental stewardship by not using single-use plastic bags, straws, cutlery, plastic bottles, ticker tape, glitter cannons, lanterns and balloons.

Event organisers should follow the Resource Recovery Hierarchy (Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Dispose) when developing their waste management plan.

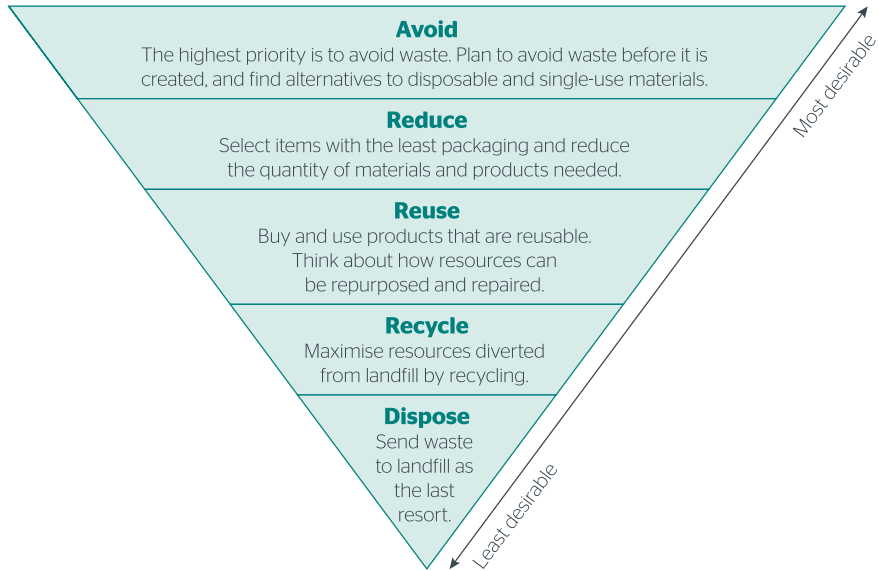
Other things to consider include:

- Choose food that requires no wrapping or packaging to minimise the amount of packaging waste and avoid plastic take-away and drink containers,
- Make sure that packaging is recyclable, biodegradable or compostable if it cannot be avoided. Ensure biodegradable and compostable packaging and material is separated from other streams and sent to the appropriate processing centre (please contact your local council for information on waste and recycling facilities in your area),
- Make it mandatory for vendors to use packaging that is either biodegradable, compostable or recyclable,
- Limit or ban single-use plastic bottles by providing free water refill stations,
- Use supplier contract requirements to require recycling and provide guidelines to help suppliers understand the types of packaging that can be recycled at your event,

- Provide for separation of as many waste streams as practically possible (e.g general waste, comingled recycling, and organic waste), both front and back of house, with clear labelling and information on what can be placed in each stream,
- Provide clearly signed bins appropriate for the quantity and type of waste produced at your event and train staff and volunteers on separation,
- Co-locate your bins, this will increase recycling rates,
- Use electronic invitation, ticket and event materials,
- Maximise use of existing facilities and temporary hire items which can be re-used,
- Limit giveaways and event materials, and ensure they have keepsake value. It is much better for your brand and avoids litter and waste. Avoid items that are disposable, plastic, or items with excessive packaging. Wherever possible source from local, recycled biodegradable or compostable materials.

Event organisers should follow the Resource Recovery Hierarchy (Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Dispose).

Resource Recovery Hierarchy



Cairns Airport Adventure Festival

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Understanding and managing the event's environmental impact

Reduce energy and water consumption to save resources and emissions.

Energy and Water

Reduce energy and water consumption to save resources and emissions.

Key considerations for suppliers, attendees and staff include:

- Minimise energy use. Consider ways to reduce your energy consumption, like procuring or hiring energy efficient appliances and equipment (e.g. use LED lights where possible),
- Where practical, switch off appliances, equipment, lighting and air-conditioning when not in use,
- Identify opportunities to use renewable energy e.g. using on site solar at privately owned venues, ask the venue manager if they are able to use energy from renewable sources,
- Reduce diesel use. Diesel generators are not preferred as they emit pollutants that are harmful to health (generator carbon dioxide can be reduced using biodiesel mixes),
- Measure or calculate your energy usage and carbon footprint, and
- make efforts to reduce and consider carbon offsets,
- Key energy sources to measure for your event are mains power and fuel used in generators. If your event is responsible for transporting equipment or attendees, transport fuel use should also be monitored,
- Reducing non-essential comfort cooling,
- Promote behaviour change to reduce energy and water consumption by staff and visitors,
- Prevent pollution of local waterways from site runoff, litter and chemicals,
- Ensure any waste-water management systems are designed with best practice,
- Identify what water usage is needed for the event and increase water efficiency,
- Engage in resource efficiency programs such as **ecoBiz** to create long-term strategies for ongoing reductions in energy, water and waste.



Capricorn Film Festival



Surfers Paradise LIVE

Sourcing environmentally and socially responsible products and services

Use venues, products and services for events that deliver more sustainable outcomes. Ask venues and suppliers about their sustainability policies and credentials.

Food and Beverage

Provide sustainable food and beverage options and reduce packaging waste.

Events could consider the following:

- Source local and in-season food produce,
- Label food appropriately (for example, gluten free), and recognise locally sourced and seasonal produce,
- Provide cups, glasses (where appropriate e.g. corporate events), plates, cutlery and food packaging

that are reusable, or if that is not possible, recyclable, biodegradable or compostable via event waste streams and in accordance with local waste infrastructure,

- Choose food that requires no wrapping or packaging to minimise the amount of packaging waste. Make sure that packaging is recyclable, biodegradable or compostable if it cannot be avoided,
- Limit the availability of plastic take-away and drink containers,
- Promote reusable water bottles to participants. Ask participants to bring a refillable water bottle and provide access to well signed cold water refill stations,
- Avoid over-catering and donate to local food banks if there is excess food,
- No sales or provision of bottled water or straws,

- Consider introducing a hire cup scheme if it works for your event.
- Food capability guides can be located:
- [City of Gold Coast](#),
 - [Logan City Council](#).

Use venues, products and services for events that deliver more sustainable outcomes.

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Sourcing environmentally and socially responsible products and services

Venue

Choose a sustainable venue that has a sustainability policy and a health and safety policy.

Finding the right venue is important in delivering a more sustainable event, as this determines transport options and suppliers.

Key guidelines for selecting venues include:

- Determining the sustainable credentials of the venue being selected, through an up-to-date sustainability policy or selecting venues that have certification e.g. ISO14001, NABERS, Greenstar, EarthCheck,
- Confirming there is a health and safety policy that is up-to-date and in use,
- Choose a venue that is close to public transport,
- Request rooms with natural ventilation and lighting,
- Keep the heating and air-conditioning in the event's rooms at a set temperature. The recommended temperature range is 19-26 degrees celsius,
- Prioritise venues with accredited green power and/ or green star accreditation for construction and building requirements,
- Some events, especially large-scale and outdoor events, can cause localised impacts on the environment and communities (including along routes to and from the venue). These may relate to noise and litter, as well as physical impacts on natural habitats and other features. Please consider these impacts before planning your event.



Key issues and measures to consider include:

- Consultation and cooperation with stakeholders, for example neighbouring landowners, public authorities, emergency services,
- Safeguards for features of ecological, landscape, cultural or archaeological importance, using hard-standing surfaces where possible (for example, the location of public access routes, fencing, signage, stewarding),
- Location of haulage routes and storage compounds for materials,
- Measures to prevent and deal with spillages of hazardous substances,
- Monitoring and managing noise,
- Minimising light spill from event and security lighting,
- Implementing contingencies to 'make good' any damage caused by the event and ensuring appropriate measures are in place to address waste,

- Ensure appropriate waste management systems are in place (including appropriate bins and signage and clean-up procedures),
- Measures to prevent and deal with spillages of water contaminants/ pollutants and hazardous substances.

Choose a sustainable venue that has a sustainability policy and a health and safety policy.

Sustainable Procurement

Purchase sustainably, and responsibly manage your supply chain. Enhance your sustainability performance through sustainable sourcing and material selection practices.

When sourcing products, first consider whether the product is essential to delivering the customer experience. Can you deliver the same or better experience using less materials and products?

Also ask yourself the following:

- Where does it come from?
 - Seek to source from local and sustainable businesses and supply chains, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses, not-for-profits and socially responsible organisations,

- Where this is not an option, try to source Australian-made and make sure you understand where items are coming from and how they will be transported,
- What is it made of?
 - Products with a high amount of recycled content that can be further recycled or products that are biodegradable or compostable are preferable,
 - Look for products that carry widely recognised sustainability certifications, like timber or paper products that carries Forest Stewardship Council Chain of Custody certification,
 - Always avoid single-use plastic products,

- Who made it?
 - Check to ensure sourced products and services are subject to fair employment practices,
- How is it packaged?
 - Minimise packaging. Where it is required, ensure it is made of recycled materials and is recyclable,
 - Ensure packaging is recycled through appropriate waste management options,
- What will happen to it after the event?
 - Could the product be used again for future events or will it immediately end up in landfill?
 - Extend event material life by producing generic, re-usable signage and media walls which can be used for multiple events or re-skinned and used again.



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Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games

Engaging and communicating with communities

Take the opportunity to highlight an event’s environmental sustainability credentials and ensure the event is accessible, safe and secure.

Take the opportunity to highlight an event’s environmental sustainability credentials and ensure the event is accessible, safe and secure.

Making the effort to communicate an event’s sustainability credentials recognises the efforts made to deliver better outcomes at the event, showcases sustainability achievements, and builds community awareness and engagement on the importance of sustainability. By promoting inclusion and accessibility we welcome the whole community (regardless of gender, age, ability, race, orientation, socio-economic status, cultural background or political affiliations).

Communicate Sustainability Efforts

Provide information to communicate and promote your sustainability efforts. Ensure all participants can receive and relay information before, during and after the event.

Good communications are an essential part of a sustainable event. It is important to ensure all participants can receive and relay information before, during and after the event.

Good practice measures for communications include:

- Prioritising communications by electronic mail and other new media applications, and use online registration as an alternative to paper,
- Where it is necessary to print materials, good practice measures include: double-sided printing, printing in black ink on a light

background, using colour only for essential messaging, maximising the contrast between text and background, avoiding printing text on top of images, providing information on posters rather than individual handouts. Other measures include:

- maximising the recycled content of the material to be printed on,
- using inks with minimal environmental impacts, such as vegetable-based inks,
- stating accurate details of material and printing processes on all products (for example, printed on 100 per cent recycled paper from post-consumer waste using vegetable-based inks),

- Clearly communicate attendee requirements (e.g. bring your own refillable water bottles or green bags) and promote sustainable behaviours through explaining the importance to potential participants,
- Ensuring invitations and advertisements are accessible to a wide range of people,
- Asking delegates to specify any accessibility requirements or whether they’ll be bringing personal assistants/support workers/ assistance dogs with them,
- Providing an overview of the access provision that you are already planning to provide, for example, step-free access, sign language, interpreter or other language interpreters, speech to text, large print versions of text, audio versions, Braille, easy read (where possible provide audio, large print and easy read in electronic format in advance) and use clear language,
- Provide opportunities for event organisers to be educated on how to be more sustainable,
- Establish a sustainable events working group for your event.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Promote inclusivity by welcoming the whole community (regardless of gender, age, ability, race, orientation, socio-economic status, cultural background or political affiliations), and make sure that the event venue is accessible to people of all needs and eliminate barriers (physical or otherwise).

People from different walks of life are to feel welcomed to attend events. You can help encouraging inclusivity and accessibility through:

- Adopting an inclusivity and diversity framework for your events,
- Include a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land, as appropriate,
- Consider the impacts to communities in close proximity to the event location and identify any cultural sensitivities that need to be managed,
- Support local businesses, those owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, not-for-profits and socially responsible organisations,
- Encouraging community groups to become involved in events,
- Checking the venue is accessible to people of all needs (it’s best to check the venue yourself),
- Ensuring the venue is located close to taxi ranks and booked-hire pick-up/drop off areas (permanent or temporary), accessible public transport, walking/cycling routes, accessible parking and secure bike racks,
- Providing standalone and sufficient taxi/booked hire pick-up/drop off areas for people with a mobility impairment or a disability. Facilities should be in close proximity to venue entries/exits, and connected

by safe and accessible pathways in accordance with *Disability and Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) requirements. (This could include, for example, wheelchair access, pathways with gradients of no greater than 1:14 and the provision of tactile markings),

- Ensuring the venue caters for people with different needs. For example, based on who you expect to attend your event, you might consider safe play areas for children and induction loops for those with hearing impairment,
- Making sure there is clear signage to the venue including wayfinding signage to car parks, taxi/booked hire ranks, kiss and ride facilities, public transport facilities, courtesy bus/shuttle drop off areas, and coach drop off areas, as required,
- Provide catering choices for all participants that meet expectations for cultural, healthy, nutritious food and beverage, including specific dietary options such as gluten free, nut free, vegetarian and halal where appropriate,
- Ensure easily accessible tables or counters are available for serving all food and beverage through either design or operational solutions for people with impairments,
- Confirm there is adequate public liability insurance.

For more information on disability standards please visit the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#).

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Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement

A Welcome to Country is encouraged for all events and festivals.

What is a Welcome to Country?

A Welcome to Country is a protocol where Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners welcome others to the land of their ancestors.

The Welcome to Country ceremony is carried out at significant events and formal functions involving people from other parts of the country or from overseas. This practice shows respect for the Traditional Owners and Elders of a particular area or region.

When is a Welcome to Country required?

A Welcome to Country should be conducted at major public functions. Appropriate functions include government organised, funded and co-funded events, including events supported by Tourism and Events Queensland, such as:

- openings of festivals and the start of events
- award programs
- conferences
- significant community engagement forums.

A Welcome to Country is encouraged for all events and festivals and should be incorporated into events where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, programs or services are being promoted.

It is important to ensure correct protocol is adhered to when liaising with and identifying Traditional Owners. It is good practice to request the involvement of the Traditional Owner at least two weeks prior to the event day.

What is an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Elders?

The Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Elders differs from a Welcome to Country in that it can be delivered by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

This practice demonstrates respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and recognises the importance of acknowledging Traditional Owners of the land and/or sea.

A master of ceremonies either introduces the Traditional Owner representative to provide a Welcome to Country or makes an Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Elders. Other key speakers and participants may wish to take the opportunity to also precede their discussions with an Acknowledgement.

A short pause should be taken after the acknowledgement as a sign of respect, before proceedings continue.

Is there a fee for a Welcome to Country?

Most Traditional Owner groups or representative groups will require a nominal fee to cover the cost of conducting the Welcome to Country ceremony.

A Welcome to Country that includes a traditional dance or smoking ceremony will generally involve a more substantial payment.

For advice and further information, please contact 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or visit www.qld.gov.au.

It is also recommended to contact the relevant local council and regional tourism organisation for contact details of the local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners.

Source: [Queensland Government Website](http://www.qld.gov.au).

Cape York Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival



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