

2024

How to run a Sustainable Event





Have you considered sustainability in the planning and delivery of your next event?

The Party Guide is for small gatherings where you are just after some quick ideas for sustainable purchasing.

Read on for more in depth information.



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Party Guide

Birthday parties, barbecues, outdoor weddings and picnics are all great ways to get together with friends and family, but they often generate a lot of unnecessary waste.



You can be the ultimate host and still enjoy an eco-friendly gathering

Decorations

- Fabric/cardboard garlands, paper lanterns, Japanese paper balloons, homemade pom poms
- Painted timber crates as stools/tables, timber wreaths with leaves entwined
- Table cloths – use paper or second-hand colourful fabrics
- Fresh flowers, herbs or branches from the garden.

Guest gifts and favours

- Potted plant or pot with soil/seeds to take home
- Fabric bags packed with pencils, wooden spinning tops and other reusable gifts
- Make your own flower head garlands from branches and local flowers.

Party games

- Homemade bubble mixture and twisted wire to make simple wands
- Pass the parcel wrapped in newspaper, piñata
- Painting activity with wooden figures, animal shapes, make your own mask
- Decorate your own homemade cookies with coloured icing.

Serving ware

- Browse Single-Use Plastic alternatives [here](#)
- Replace cling wrap with beeswax wraps, or store food in sealed containers
- Cutlery / crockery, plates, cups, bowls, trays - use washable ones and store for next time or,
- Use 'home certified compostable' serving ware which can be put in your compost
- If you must use straws choose paper, silicone or metal which can be composted/reused.

Food and drinks

- Provide water dispenser, jugs and cups. Make your own drinks instead of packaged juice
- Package-free finger food: fruit skewers, olives, carrots/cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes, home-made pesto, guacamole, hummus dips, sushi
- Make big quantities of curry, lasagne, potato/cauliflower gratin, salads and make your own cake
- Lollies – make your own chocolate, caramel fudge or fruit roll-ups, or buy from a bulk store.tip.

Venue

Power

Use your event to promote alternatives to fossil fuels such as solar, bio-fuels, wind, pedal or grid renewable energy. You can partner with providers of these technologies and showcase them at your event.

You can reduce the carbon footprint of an event by:

- ▶ Reducing power requirements for your event
- ▶ [Choosing green power](#)
- ▶ [Buying carbon offset products](#)

Biodiesel generators

Biodiesel is a diesel fuel substitute made from vegetable oils or animal fats. It is used to generate electricity. Lighting towers and variable message boards can be powered by biodiesel or solar.

Generators that use 2nd generation cooking oils, or oils that are a by-product of other food processing or non-edible oilseeds, are preferable. Rather than oil from food crops grown solely to produce oil.

Portable toilets

A sustainable, portable toilet service is maintained with chemicals free of formaldehyde, alcohol, aerosols, butyl, and glycol and uses chlorine-free paper products.

Waste from portable toilets should also be considered. Paper products and water used in flushable stalls can be conserved through dispensing systems. Grey water from sinks can be treated and recycled. Waterless urinals and compostable toilets are also available for hire.

Water refill stations

One of the most common single-use plastic items found at events, and most damaging to the environment, are water bottles. Consider renting one or more water stations onsite and encourage people to bring their own bottle.

Photo refilling water station at an event?



Transport

Transport is often the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions for events. Please consider:

- Proximity of venue to public transport
- Timing of the event with respect to ease and safety of public transport use
- Promotion of sustainable transport options
- Including the cost of public transport in the ticket price
- Organising shuttle buses from railway station to venue
- Hiring bike racks to allow people to park their bike safely.



Catering

Food consumption and catering choices have significant social and environmental impacts, both locally and globally. Please consider:

- Does the caterer have sustainability credentials?
- Can they provide vegetarian/vegan/free-range/certified organic, Fairtrade /ethical options?
- How many people need to be catered for? Over-estimating numbers creates waste.
- How far has the food travelled for the event? Is it [Australia Grown](#) or a [Product of Australia](#)?
- How will food waste be managed at the end of the event?



Ctrl + Click on any of the links on this page to learn more about Fairtrade, Certified Organic, Australian Made/Product of Australia/Australian Grown etc.

- ▶ [Animal cruelty free food](#)
- ▶ [Sustainable Seafood Guide](#)
- ▶ [Sustainable seafood product finder](#)
- ▶ [Fairtrade](#)
- ▶ [Ethical consumer guide](#)
- ▶ [Avoiding food waste](#)
- ▶ [Healthy Catering Resources](#)



Procurement

It's important to look at the type of equipment, products and materials you will purchase and/or hire for the event. Considerations include:

- Is the item really necessary in the running of the event – can you do without it? If you need it, think about something you will be able to reuse in the future.
- What is the item made of? Does it contain any toxic materials? Does it contain virgin materials and if so, where does it come from?
- How much energy and water is used in its production and to operate it?
- Can the packaging for pre-prepared food and beverages be reduced or a more sustainable alternative provided?
- Can the item be recycled or reused after the event?
- How will the item be disposed of at the end of its life?
- Avoid being a victim of greenwashing*. Be wary of claims that are vague and not supported by evidence, e.g. 'natural', 'green' or 'environment friendly'. Check for credible eco-certification by familiarising yourself with trusted [eco-labels, standards and certifications](#).



- ▶ [Find certified products](#)
- ▶ [Certified printers, timber and paper](#)

*Greenwash is the practice of making false, misleading and/or deceptive claims about the environmental practices of a company or the environmental attributes of its goods and/ or services.

Serving ware

Plates, bowls and cups distributed by food stallholders are a major source of single-use plastic waste. Please consider:

- Designating a space where people can sit and eat and use stallholders' washable serving ware, if applicable?
- Using compostable products rather than biodegradable/degradable items.
 - **Compostable** items are plant based and compostable
 - **Biodegradable** items are also plant-based but will degrade slower
 - **Degradable** items are made from petroleum and cannot break down completely. These items should be avoided
 - **Check out the table below for more detail.**

► [Browse Single-use Plastic item suppliers on Bye Bye Plastic](#)

Single use Materials

What's the difference between compostable, biodegradable and degradable? Which one should you be using?

	Material	Source / Base Ingredient	Durable for Packaging	Disposal Method	Biogrgadable
✘	Plastic	Petrochemicals	Yes	Ideally recycled usually landfill	No – remains plastic or breaks into micro-plastics (lasting forever)
▼	Biodegradable or Bio-plastic	Plant cellulose/ corn starch	Yes	Ideally industrial composting usually landfill	Not without special industrial treatment
▼	Bagasse	Sugar cane pulp	Yes	Can be industrially composted, often landfilled	Yes
▼	Bamboo/ Wood	Bamboo plantation	Yes	Can be home or industrially composted often landfilled	Yes
▼	Paper/ Cardboard	Wood pulp/ recycled paper/ trees	Limited, depends on usage and conditions	Can be recycled if not contaminated, can be composted	Yes
▼	Home Compostable Packaging	Crustacean shell, mushroom fibre, seaweed	Intentionally yes, still being tested	Designed for home compost/ to be highly degradable	Yes, designed to be highly degradable, will enrich soil

Don't forget, reusable is best!
#helloby



Accreditations and certifications to look out for when purchasing

Bioplastics & Home Compost



Cardboard & Paper



Waste management

It is important to have measures in place to manage your waste to maximise resource recovery and recycling. Please consider:

- Ensuring people are informed, prior to the event if possible, that you are trying to minimise waste
- Asking event MCs to encourage their audience to actively participate in the recycling and waste management program
- Providing adequate number of bins and collection services for each waste stream. Bin lid, bin cap, and bin body colours must comply with the Australian standard for mobile bins. *Contact Council's Waste Services team to ascertain bin number & bin colour requirements.*
- Consider collecting organic waste if a system like a worm farm or compost is available onsite or having an organic waste collection for food waste /compostable ware. Ensure bins and lids explain clearly what goes in which bin – see below examples
- Allocating staff or volunteers to monitor bins to educate the audience and minimise cross contamination
- Emptying bins regularly before they overflow. If landfill waste bins are full, recycling and organic bins will quickly become contaminated.

► [Council's waste services for events](#)



Event Resources

- ▶ [Sustainable Event Alliancee](#) (SEA) is the industry association for event organisers. The SEA offers event professionals a pathway to understanding sustainability issues in event planning and delivery. Members have access to the supplier database, how-to guides and professional development.
- ▶ [A Greener Future](#) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to reducing the negative environmental impacts of music festivals/events. This UK-based site has links to festivals and resources all around the world.
- ▶ Visit Council's [Net Zero Ku-ring-gai](#) page for more ideas and tips on how to run a Sustainable event.

*Thank you for helping our local environment
and most importantly enjoy your event!*

