

Sustainable Events: Measurement, Marketing & Engagement





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A sustainable event results in additional benefits to staff, stallholders, suppliers and attendees such as operating efficiencies, a safer workplace and a cleaner environment. Gaining commitment from a broad range of stakeholders will maximise overall benefits.

With accurate monitoring and measurement of sustainability actions, events can confidently reflect their achievements and substantiate any public statements. Communication and engagement can also be tailored to different audiences.



Success story

In pre-event marketing, the City of Adelaide encouraged patrons to bring their own reusable water bottles, use active or public transport and used the hashtag #StrawFreeADL to promote that [New Year's Eve 2018](#) was free of single-use straws. When surveyed, 96% of attendees thought that sustainable events are important, and 95% agreed with a ban on single-use plastic straws.

Did you know?

Adopting sustainability principles when planning an event and promoting these could attract a broader audience. The event industry in Adelaide has embraced sustainable events, which in turn supports the market for sustainable products and services.

This checklist can be used as a guide to achieving sound measurement, marketing and communications for a sustainable event. Simply select actions that are applicable to your event and ensure regular reviews for continued improvement.



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Before the event

- Decide what you are going to measure and record, so that you can manage impacts better and enjoy operational efficiencies. The major areas for improvement are:
 - Waste and recycling – weight and volume of wastes. This can be requested from waste contractors or through waste composition audits.
 - Energy used – kWh used from electricity bills or litres of fuel from generators.
 - Waste – litres of water used at the event.
 - Transport – how staff or guests travel, via surveys or counts.
 - Carbon emissions – calculated from a combination of the above.
 - Establish a general baseline for comparisons from previous events and data.
 - Set clear, measurable goals and targets for the event. For example: 20% less waste to landfill, or 25% less energy used.
- Tip:** you can work on different areas of improvement one at a time, rather than all at once.
- Report improvements in your own organisation, so that stakeholders and sponsors can see how you are reducing environmental impact.
 - Compare results with previous events, document what worked well as well as lessons learnt, and plan for future actions.

Interested in offsetting emissions or going carbon neutral?

Carbon emissions come from the following sources, and the data can be obtained directly from invoices or indirectly from surveys or estimates.

- Electricity (kWh)
- Petrol and gas (L)
- Refrigerants (kg)
- Waste (kg)
- Staff travel (trips, including flights)
- Water (L)
- Paper (kg)
- Other industrial gases (kg)

These data sources can be converted to a carbon dioxide equivalent either in-house with an online calculator, or by a consultant, for different degrees of accuracy. More information is available on the [Carbon Neutral Adelaide](#) website.

Events can purchase carbon offsets to 'cancel out' the climate impact of emission sources. You can choose a meaningful component like electricity or flights to offset.

'[Climate Neutral Now](#)' is one example of an international website with a calculator especially for event organisers and an online shop to purchase offsets. Other services are listed on the [Carbon Neutral Adelaide](#) website under '[Take Action](#).'

Organisers can be certified 'carbon neutral' for an event, or their whole organisation via the Australian Government's [Climate Active Program](#), which provides accounting rigour and support.

City of Adelaide provides financial assistance to organisations undertaking greenhouse inventories, audits and emissions reduction strategies through the [Sustainability Incentives Scheme](#).



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Marketing

- Include promotion of key sustainability actions in your communications plan.
- Make a publicly available Statement of Commitment for sustainability measurement and engagement.
- Appoint a spokesperson who can talk about the sustainable features of the event, or use a local community group or well-known public figure.
- Include key sustainability actions in media releases about the event. Be prepared for interviews.
- Minimise printed material by using digital mediums and ensure any necessary printing is on responsibly sourced carbon neutral certified materials which can be reused and/or recycled.
- Promote South Australia's reputation as a leader in environmental change by clearly and consistently communicating environmental commitments and achievements pre, during and post event.
- Differentiate the event from others and strengthen brand integrity by highlighting unique sustainability features or trials.
- Prominently display objectives and achievements at key areas and touchpoints pre, during and post event, to raise awareness, engage and encourage behaviour change.

Engagement

- Collaborate closely with stakeholders (i.e. stallholders, performers, suppliers, attendees and others) to find value and stories for sharing.
- Engage with attendees to document their views, values, barriers and aspirations.
- Partner with likeminded organisations to collaboratively achieve shared outcomes more efficiently.
- Proactively engage and educate stakeholders and the community by showcasing sustainability credentials through interactive techniques (i.e. physical theatre/gamification) pre, during and post event.
- Ask stakeholders for feedback and ideas

Tip: ask for anecdotal or measurable data they collected

- Include a sustainability information point at the event, ensuring staff are well educated to confidently discuss the topic.
- Clearly communicate objectives to staff, suppliers, contractors, volunteers and enforce contract clauses.
- Get creative and create a legacy project as part of the event.
- Share stories with the sustainability team at the City of Adelaide: sustainability@cityofadelaide.com.au

For more information on event sustainability, visit the City of Adelaide [Sustainable Events](#) web page.

This checklist was informed by multiple existing resources including those from the Cities of Brisbane and Melbourne. Kind thanks to everyone working in this space.

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cityofadelaide.com.au/sustainable-events