

Sustainable Events: Waste Management





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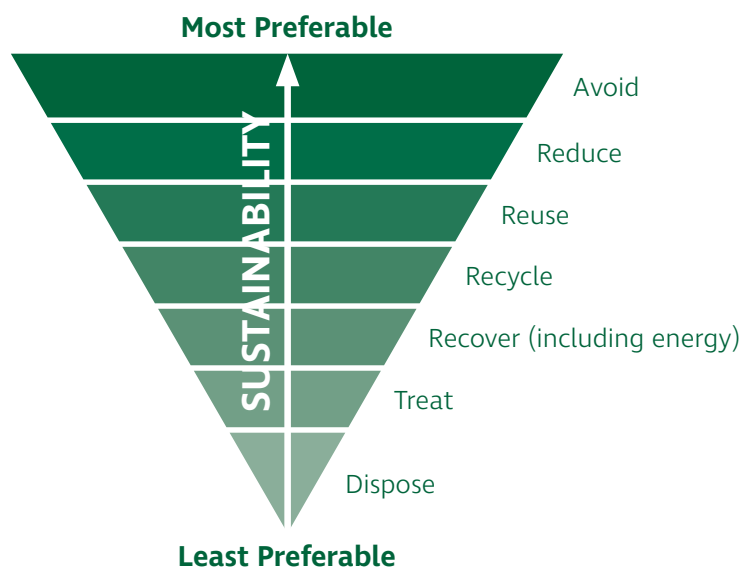
Waste can be a big part of events, and it can accumulate through set up and pack down, supply of food and drinks and promotional materials, to name a few. Reducing waste through careful planning minimises the impact on the environment, aligns with community expectations, improves efficiencies, reduces energy use and saves money.

Good waste management follows a hierarchy of avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle. This means:

- 1) avoiding unnecessary materials (packaging/waste) where possible
- 2) reducing waste generated
- 3) reusing or recycling materials

There are opportunities to reduce waste by improving waste separation and recycling systems at events. Adopting a three-bin system that is similar to attendees' household system is a great start. Education using volunteers to monitor bin stations or gamified interaction can also support positive outcomes.

Graphic: South Australia's Waste Strategy 2015-2020, Green Industries SA, 2015



Success story

The 2018 [Vogue Festival](#) launch was a private event for 175 guests. Most of the materials from the launch were co-mingled recyclables which were sent to appropriate recycling facilities. After the event, advertising banners were recycled and made into 91 tote bags, 16 clutches and one dress. Who says you can't recycle fashion!

This checklist can be used as a guide to achieving a low waste event. Simply select actions that are applicable to your event and ensure regular reviews for continued improvement.

Templates for the creation of contracts, planning and communication have been created to assist with several items in this checklist and are linked where relevant. They can also be found on the City of Adelaide website.



Sustainable Event Waste Management Checklist

Before the event

- Plan to follow the waste hierarchy with an appropriate [Waste Management Plan](#).
- [Set achievable goals and targets](#) to avoid waste and increase recycling by monitoring event outcomes over time and assessing areas for improvement.

Stakeholders

- Choose a venue or space with a [National Australian Built Environment Rating System](#) (NABERS) waste or [Green Star](#) rating and/or a site with an appropriate waste management system.
- Choose a venue with drinking fountains, consider installing them, or hire temporary ones to reduce the reliance on single use water bottles

Tip: make drinking fountains centrally available, include their locations on maps and remind attendees to bring their own reusable bottle.

- Encourage or incentivise staff, stakeholders and attendees to BYO reusable materials like bottles, coffee cups, etc.
- [Communicate requirements with stakeholders](#) early and work with like-minded organisations to prioritise waste reduction and source appropriate items.
- Educate and encourage stakeholders to practice [good resource management](#) with bulk purchases in reusable containers and reduced or recyclable packaging.
- Provide reusable food and drink containers or mandate vendors to use [compostable containers](#) (certified to Australian Standards: AS 4736-2006/AS 5810-2010) and provide organics bins to collect compostable material for correct disposal.
- Ensure [contract agreements](#) match waste reduction goals and monitor, verify and report data with supporting evidence.
- Collaborate with food rescue services like local foodbanks and charities, to determine their capacity to accept any excess food from the event and plan accordingly to avoid waste.
- Work with organisations, industry bodies and governments to trial new resource conservation and recovery ideas or other innovative sustainable actions.
- Purchase carbon offsets to suit likely waste generation.

Waste systems

- Consider possible waste types, how much material and from where it is likely to be generated and accommodate accordingly with enough appropriate bins and responsible disposal
- As a minimum, [implement a three-bin system](#) (organics (green) recycling (yellow) and landfill (red)) for attendees, stallholders and service providers, ensuring appropriate disposal.
- If possible, provide multiple streams of waste bins tailored to what is likely to be generated, such as;
 - organics
 - recyclables
 - 10c deposit bottles and containers
 - cardboard
 - soft plastics
 - landfill
 - cigarette butts
 - liquid waste and oils
 - animal waste
 - electronic (e-waste) recycling
 - other speciality recycling
i.e. corflute/cable ties.



Sustainable Event Waste Management Checklist

Before the event: Waste systems (cont.)

- Use clear, simple, colour-coded and consistent signage that identifies what can go in which bin.

Tip: contact [Green Industries South Australia](#) or [Council](#) to source existing resources.

- Include bin placement in pre-event site plans and provide electronic copies to key stakeholders to ensure appropriate space is allocated for logistics.
- Mark bin locations on attendee maps (favouring electronic maps) and consider adding tips for tricky items or items that will likely be used at the event (i.e. compostable cutlery and cups).
- Make your event straw free and/or eliminate single use items like plastic bags, plastic water bottles, stirrers, balloons, confetti and set props, and make this objective clear to attendees, staff, suppliers and vendors.
- Make a [public statement of commitment](#) on waste minimisation and resource recovery that provides a clear message and tips to share what the event/brand stands for and promote this widely.
- Monitor attendance numbers to ensure supply is accurate (i.e. no excess food waste), and to ensure the appropriate number of bins are provided.

Materials

- Avoid purchasing unnecessary items and borrow/hire where possible. When purchasing materials, prioritise quality items made from recycled content, refurbished items, reusable, minimally packaged and recyclable items, avoiding single-use items where possible.
- Preference online promotion and ticketing; and electronic versions of documents and record keeping instead of printing. Where printing is required, efficiently print double-sided on responsibly sourced carbon neutral certified paper.
- If necessary, use generic staff uniforms or provide uniforms that are:
 - reused
 - made from recycled materials
 - will be reused (no dates/locations printed) or will be upcycled.

During the event

- Reduce printing and handouts by providing information on central signs (electronic where possible).
- Educate and inspire community and stakeholders with signage, information, MC announcements and engagement, to encourage support and good waste management behaviour.
- Offer incentives to attendees (and staff) for waste reduction efforts i.e. discounts for BYO cups.
- Offer reusable items like cups, plates or bottles (for free, deposit or purchase) with appropriate wash stations where possible.
- Choose giveaways and prizes that are experiences or consumables (i.e. a free drink at the event, a dining e-voucher, or e-tickets to a local show or experience).
- Survey attendees on their attitudes to recycling and waste reduction at the event.
- Train staff & volunteers to confidently assist the community & stakeholders with good waste management.



Sustainable Event Waste Management Checklist

During the event (cont.)

- If bin liners are used, ensure their colour matches the waste stream (e.g. a green compostable liner for organics bins), making it easier for staff to quickly identify the right bin.
- Ensure bins are clean and in good working order and that the site remains clean and litter free to encourage attendees to take care of the site.
- Present bins together, always in the same order (from L-R) - organics, recycling, landfill – and in central locations (i.e. entry/exit and food service points). Label them using appropriate colours, images and words to increase visibility and correct use.
- Allocate staff to regularly monitor, empty and replace bins as needed, supporting the best waste management outcomes.
- If bins are not being used, relocate them and corresponding signage to busier areas.
- Conduct onsite evaluations to capture data for reporting (i.e. the number of BYO items used onsite, bin audits, waste generated, etc.) and take photos.
- Monitor vendors and have solutions available for non-compliance (i.e. back up compostable packaging).

After the event

- Donate any extra food, materials or resources to local food banks and/or charities that have agreed to take excess resources from the event.
- Clean the site to ensure that no litter or pollution is left behind so that it does not blow or get washed into surrounding areas or watercourses.
- Ensure chemicals and oils are disposed of responsibly, not poured down drains.
- Ensure organics, recycling, landfill and other waste streams remain separate and placed in the correct location for collection and appropriate disposal.
- Talk with the venue or waste contractors to seek evidence of correct disposal and processing.
- Conduct a waste audit to collect data on the total amounts of waste and recycling generated/collected/diverted from landfill including data on contamination rates.
- Arrange the return of unused products with suppliers and encourage upcycling of materials where possible i.e. pallets into furniture.
- Conduct an online survey asking attendees about their perception on how waste was managed at the event, if they brought their own reusable bottles, if they noticed waste reduction initiatives, if waste reduction is important to them, etc.
- If required, send stakeholders electronic thank you notes/gifts or choose experience gifts or gifts that contain local recycled content and minimise packaging.
- Celebrate waste reduction efforts with all stakeholders including the community, sharing outcomes and thanking everyone involved.
- Document opportunities, setting goals for future events and tracking progress over time.
- Evaluate greenhouse gas emissions from the event.
- Consider pursuing carbon neutral certification, via [Climate Active](#).
- Share stories with the sustainable events team at the City of Adelaide: sustainability@cityofadelaide.com.au



Sustainable Event Waste Management Checklist

For more information on Waste and Recycling visit greenindustries.sa.gov.au or whichbin.sa.gov.au

Did you know?

South Australia leads the nation with the best recycling rate! Our diversion and recovery rate means that 1.25 million tonnes of greenhouse gases are prevented from being released, the same as planting two million trees; or taking 316,000 cars off the road each year, which will help us all breathe more easily.

Waste Management Tips



Avoid single use waste as much as possible - if you can't reuse it, refuse it.



Add extra cost to single use items to encourage re-usable items



Provide appropriately coloured and signed organics and recycling collection bins



Partner with an organisation that collects leftover food and redistributes it to people in need



Reward attendees who BYO their cups, bags and bottles

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