



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Sustainability
Campus Management

SUSTAINABLE EVENTS GUIDE



SUSTAINABLE EVENTS GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This Sustainable Events Guide has been developed to help staff and students at the University of Melbourne run events with sustainability as a core focus. Through the guide, you will learn about the importance of sustainable events, their environmental impacts and what you can do to minimise them. You will find out about the services the University offers to help you run a sustainable event and can use one of our five sustainable event checklists to ensure your success.

These checklists can be found at the end of this guide and are for:

- Meetings/small events (20–50 local attendees)
- Medium events (50–100 local attendees)
- Large events/conferences (+100 attendees)
- Outdoor festivals/expos
- Choosing a venue

The guide and checklists above all aim to support the University community to work towards running zero-waste events. For further support, reach out to the Sustainability Team or visit the Sustainability Website for more information.

sustainable-campus@unimelb.edu.au
sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au

“Through knowledge, imagination and action the University will help shape a sustainable planet and will be an international exemplar of an ecologically sustainable community.”

The University’s [Sustainability Charter](#)

Please note: The University is committed to delivering COVIDSafe events in line with government and health advice. **Please ensure COVIDSafe practices are followed** in the planning and running of all events on campus by visiting [Events](#) and [COVID-19](#) on the University’s Staff Hub.





SUSTAINABILITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

The University of Melbourne is committed to being a global leader in sustainability through embedding sustainability into all areas. We have made a public commitment to do so through our Sustainability Framework, comprising of the [Sustainability Charter](#) and [Sustainability Plan 2017–2020](#). By focusing on sustainability in all areas of operations, learning and teaching, research, engagement, leadership and governance we can become a zero-waste university and create a better future for all staff, students and the wider community.

THE IMPACT OF OUR EVENTS

Events are a fantastic way to engage with a large number of people, make connections, foster collaboration and raise awareness. However, they can cause significant environmental impact. In a world where resources are rapidly diminishing and society contributes to excessive (and often unethical) consumption, an area we have the capacity to make significant improvements to our operational sustainability is through the **events we run**.

Each year, well over 2,000 events* are held at the University of Melbourne. Ranging from the hundreds of small meetings that take place on campus each day, to large annual celebrations, like Open Day. Every single event, regardless of size, has the potential to demonstrate sustainability leadership by the University.

Events are also a great way to raise awareness about sustainability and to help drive positive change. They present an excellent opportunity to inspire attendees, including students, staff, suppliers and the local community.

This sustainable events guide has been developed to help event organisers plan and deliver successful events that minimise negative impacts on the environment and foster positive community relations wherever possible.

*This figure is likely to be much higher, as this does not include all faculty/department run morning teas and smaller workshops. This figure includes mainly external facing events and those captured through the University's central events booking process. The real number is likely to be almost double at approximately 4,000 events annually.



CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Sustainability at the University of Melbourne	3
The impact of our events	3
1. What is a sustainable event?	6
2. Why are sustainable events important?	7
3. It starts with a plan	8
4. Environmental impacts of events:	9
4.1 Food and beverages	9
4.1.1 Reducing food waste	9
4.1.2 Catering: meetings and small events	10
4.1.3 Catering: larger events	10
4.2 Waste	14
4.2.1 Did you know that recycling is not the solution?	
An introduction to the circular economy	14
4.2.2 The importance of reuse	15
4.2.3 Bin it right	16
4.2.4 Tips to reduce single-use plastic	17
4.2.5 The true cost of 'freebies'	18
4.2.6 Go paperless	19
4.2.7 Decorations	20
4.3 Education and awareness	21
4.4 Reducing the carbon footprint of your event	22
4.4.1 Avoid flying: consider video conferencing/online events	22
4.4.2 Taking public transport	22
4.4.3 Carbon offsetting	23
5. Summary of available events services at the University of Melbourne	24
6. Reference list	25
7. Sustainable event checklists:	26
Meetings/small events	26
Medium events	27
Large events/conferences	28
Outdoor festivals/expos	29
Choosing a venue	31

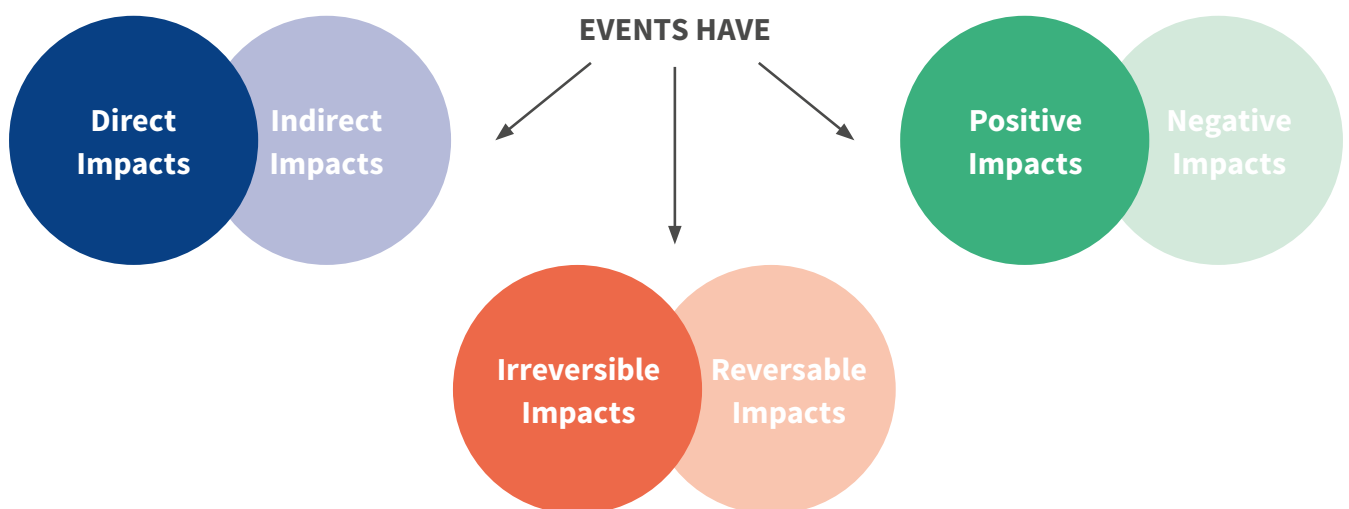
1. WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE EVENT?



A sustainable event is one that has been planned responsibly, where all possible efforts have been made to reduce negative environmental, social and financial impacts and to avoid the depletion of natural resources.

Events can have a diverse range of impacts on the surrounding environment and local communities.

Not all impacts are negative! Some can be positive, such as supporting local business or improving infrastructure. Throughout this guide however, we will largely be focussing on impacts that are either directly or indirectly negative and how we can put in place processes and implement solutions to reduce these impacts.



2. WHY ARE SUSTAINABLE EVENTS IMPORTANT?

The University of Melbourne has a strong reputation as a leader in sustainability. With highly visible events for both our student and staff community and external stakeholders, it is important that we are seen to be ‘walking the talk’.



Reputation as a leader for sustainability



Student and staff expectations



Improving the campus experience



Reducing consumption



Because it's the right thing to do

Not to mention, there are a range of benefits for running a sustainable event for you, your participants and the planet!

Save money!

Save money:

- By making efforts to conserve energy, buy less and consume less, you can also save money

Positive reputation

Positive reputation:

- Students and staff care about sustainability ([2020 Sustainability Survey](#)).
- Help increase interest and awareness of sustainability issues

Social benefits

Social benefits:

- Foster a strong sense of community
- Encourage local investment
- Supporting small/ethical business
- Promote better working conditions and social inclusion

Lead and innovate

Lead and innovate:

- Create best practice
- Lead by example
- Help drive demand for new technology and techniques

3. IT STARTS WITH A PLAN

Running a sustainable event is a management skill, not just a marketing skill!



Use this guide: Almost every aspect of planning for an event, regardless of size, has been considered in this document.



Start early and consider sustainability impacts at every stage of planning for your event.



Use a checklist: We have five checklists available to help with your next event. Don't be afraid to look around for other checklists and guidance – there are plenty that are just a quick Google away.



Define your sustainability aims and goals.



Never stop asking for sustainability inclusions: this way you help drive demand.



After your event, register it on the [Sustainable Events Register](#).



4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF EVENTS:

4.1 FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Most events provide food and beverages in one form or another. It might be as simple as providing tea and coffee or a water station, or you might be hosting a fully catered event, with morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

When it comes to food and beverages, it's important to choose wisely, as your choices can contribute to this being the **biggest environmental impact of an event**.

4.1.1 REDUCING FOOD WASTE

Ensuring your event doesn't produce excess food waste is an easy step that can have one of the biggest impacts.



Ask attendees to register, so you've got a good idea of how many people to cater for. Including a statement on why you are asking people to register their attendance can help attendees feel accountable.



Under order! How many times have you left an event where organisers are trying to offload excess food? By under ordering catering, you can help avoid this. **We recommend under ordering by approximately 10%.**



Have a plan for leftovers. Consider bringing your own containers to collect leftovers for home. If there are students or staff around at the end of your event, offer the leftovers – students especially are often more than happy to relieve you of any excess.



Collect food scraps and waste for composting. Collect food scraps for your own compost bin/worm farm or drop off the waste at one of the organics bins across the University. Find out where the closest bin is on the [Sustainability Map](#), or contact your Campus Facilities Manager.



DID YOU KNOW?

Every year 3.3 million tons of food waste is produced in Australia. This is enough to fill the MCG six times ([War on Waste 2018](#)).

DID YOU KNOW?

On average, a food business in Victoria will throw out more than 100 kilograms of food every week ([Sustainability Victoria](#)).



4.1.2 CATERING: MEETINGS AND SMALL EVENTS

If you're planning an event for a small number of people, you may not need to engage a caterer. It's often easy enough to source some low-waste, healthy snacks yourself from the supermarket or local stores. This could include:

- Tea;
- Whole seasonal fruits;
- Seeds and nuts;
- Locally baked goods (biscuits and slices).

Most meeting rooms are located near a kitchen or kitchenettes, so it's often not a problem to easily access tap water, and you can invite attendees to make/bring their own hot drink.



TOP TIP:

Don't forget to ask attendees to bring their own water bottles and reusable cups!



4.1.3 CATERING: LARGER EVENTS

For larger events and functions, it's much more likely you'll need to engage an internal or external caterer to provide food and beverages, and to help deliver a service. To help you make your selection we've compiled a list of questions you can ask prospective caterers. This is an important part of any event planning and we encourage you to complete this step in your planning process at a minimum.

What you need to consider when choosing a caterer:

→ **Do they source their produce seasonally and locally?**

Sourcing local and seasonal food supports local producers and the production of crops that are appropriate to our environment. It reduces our reliance on long-distance transport and refrigeration of foods that are grown thousands of kilometres away ([Sustainable Living Guide](#)). Usually caterers that source their produce from farmers markets are working with local and seasonal options. Plan your menu around what is seasonal and locally available.

→ **Can they provide a good selection of vegan and vegetarian options?**

Vegetarian and vegan options are best for your event due to the [ethical](#) and [environmental benefits](#). Animal products are the most resource intensive foods to produce and are associated with numerous environmental problems. Livestock production, for example, is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, contributes to land degradation and is extremely water-intensive; it takes 50,000 litres of water to produce just one kilogram of beef! If you require animal products, ensure they are ethically sourced. This could be ethically sourced beef (e.g. grass reared or prepared with religious considerations in mind), chicken or free-range eggs. Ethical produce is grown in a way that the animals are nourished, and the environmental impact is less than intensive animal production ([Ilea, 2009](#)).



TOP TIP:

Aim for at least 50% vegetarian; but going 100% vegetarian is even better. In doing so, you're covering off one of the most common dietary requirements for attendees and significantly reducing the environmental impact of your event.



Sustainable Table have put together some simple questions to ask your supplier about their meat products:

1. **Is the meat free range or organic?**
2. **If yes, which farm did it come from?**
3. **Is it grass or grain fed?** Grass fed is preferable.
4. **If you're at the farmers' market – how far do they have to travel?**



TOP TIP:

Make sure to include this information on your menu or event info so attendees can see where their food is coming from and to raise awareness about sustainable food.

→ **Do they prioritise fair trade food options?**

Fair trade empowers disadvantaged workers and farmers, especially in developing countries to create their own sustainable livelihoods through employment, regular income, improved working conditions and more direct access to markets ([FTANZ](#)). Common fair trade items provided by caterers include a selection of chocolates, teas, coffee, hot chocolate and sugar.

The University has held [Fairtrade](#) accreditation [since 2013](#). To receive this accreditation, the University implemented 50% Fairtrade products across all kitchenettes and continues to encourage cafes and other businesses on campus to offer Fairtrade products. In 2018, the University extended its commitment to 100% Fairtrade products in kitchenettes across all campuses.



TOP TIP:

Request access to iProc through your Themis account to purchase Fairtrade items from COS (staff only).

→ **Do they prioritise carbon neutral food options?**

It is also important to consider whether the company is [carbon neutral](#), this will indirectly affect the impact of your event. Being a carbon neutral company means that there is no net release of carbon emissions throughout all their practices including sourcing, production, waste, packaging, and transportation of the food/product. It is good practice to ask any organisation you partner with if they are carbon neutral and if not, how they are reducing their carbon footprint.



TOP TIP:

Join the University's [Fair Trade Committee](#) to continue to support the use of Fair Trade products across the University and to help run the Fair Trade Market.

Case study from the City of Melbourne

The City of Melbourne runs large scale events, such as Melbourne Fashion Week and Melbourne Knowledge Week. All events run within the City of Melbourne's events portfolio are certified [Carbon Neutral](#). With each event, emission-intensive and environmentally degrading activities are avoided, and offsets are purchased for any remaining emissions production. This reduces the environmental impact of the event. Find out more about how the City's [carbon offset purchases](#) are supporting communities.

The events industry is continuing to transition to more sustainably managed and run events. This means that there is a growing number of resources and case studies to support you in hosting a sustainable event. Some global events that have been celebrated for their efforts include the [Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games](#) and [Oktoberfest](#) and more locally, the [Sydney Festival](#) and the [Byron Bluesfest](#) (Tilgals, 2020).

- Do they partner with an organisation that collects leftover food and redistributes it to people in need?

Food rescue charities are organisations who collect excess food from businesses and redistribute it to charities that support Australians who are doing it tough.



TOP TIP:

Check out this [useful list](#) of charities that are fighting against food waste.

- Are they a social enterprise, or do they give back to the community in some way?

A social enterprise caterer is one that operates on a social mission, which may include; creating local job opportunities and skills training for marginalised groups, providing healthy, local food options or celebrating the unique foods of different cultural groups.



TOP TIP:

Download the City of Melbourne's [handy guide](#) full of social enterprise caterers that service Melbourne.

- Can they avoid single-use products?

By **REFUSING** single-use products such as disposable crockery and cutlery and products with excessive packaging (e.g., single-serve packets in condiment stations or individually wrapped lollies) you can avoid one of the biggest sources of event waste.

Here is a template email you can send to caterers to ensure your event is plastic free:

Good morning,

I was hoping to place a catering order for a morning tea on (DATE). The details are below:

- EVENT TITLE
- NUMBER OF ATTENDEES CATERING ORDER
- DELIVERY AND PICK UP TIME
- DELIVERY ADDRESS
- CONTACT

Please note this is to be a fully sustainable event. As such, we request there to be no disposable or biodegradable plates, cups and cutlery; only reusable crockery, to ensure a waste-free event. We would also like to request that the food be wrapped in either foil or preferably reusable containers. No cling wrap is to be used.

Thank you for your assistance and let me know if you need more information.

Over 8 million tonnes of plastic waste enters the ocean every year, equivalent to a full garbage truck every second! In Australia alone, approximately three-quarters of coastal rubbish is plastic. Much of that is single-use plastic items like bags, bottles, straws, cutlery and food packaging. It is important to specify to your catering company to avoid all single-use products and instead replace them with reusable options such as reusable cups, plates, bowls and cutlery. Avoid single use condiments and serve them in reusable dishes or bulk containers at self-serve stations instead.

For larger events, consider a reusable cup system, where attendees pay a deposit for their cup which is refunded when they return the cup after the event. If this is not feasible ask attendees to bring their own water bottles and reusable cups and reward them for their actions. This could be through competitions, via social media or via a prize draw at the event.

DID YOU KNOW?

If your event is held at the Parkville campus, you have the option of hiring reusable items through the [Choose to Reuse Events Service](#). The service was launched in January 2020 and is available to any staff and students hosting events. The service provides reusable crockery and cutlery for a small hire and cleaning fee. Also, check out 'Fairfood challenge' the pioneering student group who started reuse at Parkville. Help the University reduce its waste to landfill by using this service. Find out more on our [website](#).



Don't be fooled – all disposables are rubbish.

Your caterer may provide you with options marketed as biodegradable or compostable that claim to be 'environmentally friendly'. However, these are still single-use products that will normally not have the chance to biodegrade or compost and will only end up in landfill.

The problem is that, in landfill, many of these products won't have the necessary conditions needed to break down – a perfect balance of light, oxygen and super high temperatures that can only be provided at an industrial composting facility, or perhaps in your at-home compost.

And if they end up in the recycling, they can contaminate the bin as many of them (like Bioplastics) are made from PLA (Polylactic Acid), a compound derived from renewable resources such as sugar cane, and can't be processed in regular recycling facilities.

Unless you can provide a specialty collection for these items, they are simply a more expensive version of regular single-use items, except they can't be put in the recycling bins on campus.



TOP TIP:

The best thing is always to REFUSE disposables all together.

→ Do they provide water stations?

The last thing you want to see at a sustainable event is bottled water. Of the billions of plastic water bottles used every year, only 1 in 5 will be recycled. Drop for drop, bottled water costs

about 2000 times more than tap water ([Cool Australia](#)), and yet the environmental costs are worse. Although most water bottles are made from recyclable material, the truth is that few are actually recycled, with the majority going straight to landfill. According to [Earth Watch](#), plastic bottles take about three times as much water to produce than they can hold. This means that three litres of water are needed to make a water bottle that only holds one litre. [Clean Up Australia](#) adds that plastic bottles are among the 10 most common rubbish items picked up on Clean Up Australia Day.

For small meetings right through to large conferences, providing water stations with jugs of water and glasses for attendees is the way to go. Also make sure you remind attendees to bring their reusable water bottles and let them know where they can easily refill them; there are a number of drinking water fountains located across University campuses.

Check out the [Sustainability Map](#) for water fountain locations and more.

If you're organising a large outdoor event, investigate setting up portable hydration stations. These stations offer high-quality water, are zero waste and attendees can refill water bottles all day.



TOP TIP:

Make sure your sponsors, partners or stall holders aren't giving away bottled water as a freebie!

DID YOU KNOW?

Although plastic bottles are recyclable, many end up in landfill and take up to 1000 years to break down.

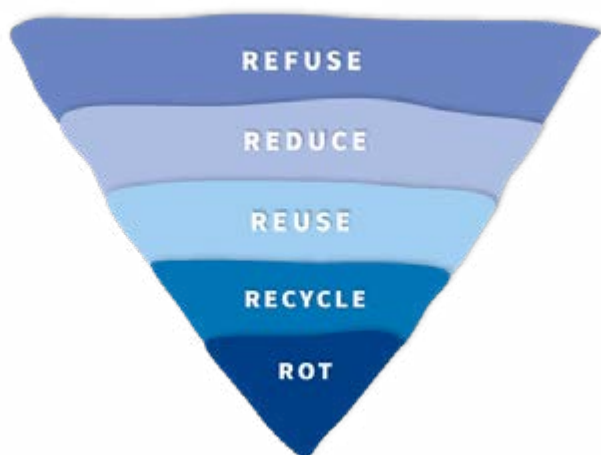
4.2 WASTE

Excessive and unnecessary waste can be one of the most significant negative environmental impacts of an event. Waste can be created by consuming food and beverages, packaging from purchased event materials, from handouts and collateral, or later down the track from giveaways that will ultimately end up in landfill.

No matter what type of event you are organising, attempting to run a **zero-waste event** should be your **#1 goal**, even if you can't achieve it. And the best way to reduce waste is to try and avoid it from the outset, following the waste reduction hierarchy.

Look at the waste reduction hierarchy and ask yourself the following questions:

THE HIERARCHY OF WASTE



- **Do I really need it?** Can you **REFUSE** unnecessary waste, such as single-use plastics?
- **What steps can I take to REDUCE generating waste?** Can I order less?
- **Can I REUSE existing resources?** What is available that I can repurpose for my event?
- Will I be able to **RECYCLE** any other waste generated?
- Can organic/food waste generated be composted to **ROT**?

DID YOU KNOW?

The University is dedicated to reducing the amount of waste we send to landfill by avoiding or minimising waste through recycling and effective waste management. One of our key targets in the Sustainability Plan 2017–2020*.

*As of 2019 in the [UoM annual Sustainability Report 2019](#) waste to landfill is currently 27kg per person.

4.2.1 DID YOU KNOW THAT RECYCLING IS NOT THE SOLUTION? AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

On the surface, the concept of recycling makes complete sense. It's a process that reuses resources, makes new products from recycled materials and uses less energy than making them from raw materials. Plus, all waste that is recycled saves it from being buried in landfill.

The reality is, unfortunately, that only a very small percentage of waste that is placed in a recycling bin actually makes it to a sorting facility; and if it does, very little is ever recycled (especially when it comes to plastics). In fact, [only 9% of the plastic waste that has ever been created, across the whole world, has been recycled](#). That means that almost every single piece of plastic made since the 1950s is accumulating in landfill or in the environment.

A small proportion of plastics do get recycled; however, this process can only happen a couple of times at best. Plastics lose quality through the recycling process and are usually only 'down cycled' once or twice to a lower grade product. Moreover, the industrial processes used in recycling and manufacturing involves significant energy and resource inputs, meaning it isn't really the best option for the environment or the economy.



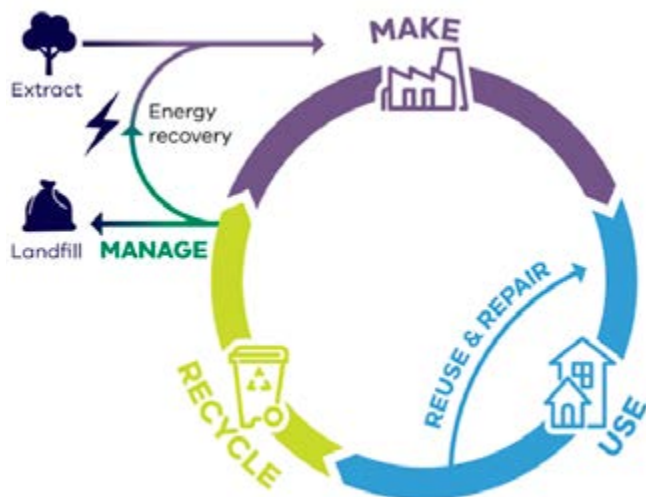
Diagram of the traditional linear economy model.

Sending our waste to landfill as part of a linear economy (i.e. a take-make-use waste model) cannot go on indefinitely. It is becoming increasingly important that we stop sending our waste to be buried for a thousand years, and instead start thinking of it as a valuable resource. Only once we make this shift in thinking will there be widescale innovation for new technologies that will see reuse and efficient recycling becoming the foundations of a new "closed loop".

A "closed loop" system, or a "circular economy" is one that incorporates reuse and recycling far more efficiently. Within a circular economy, the life of products and materials is extended as much as possible, so that more value is extracted from them and new materials and resources are needed less.

This model decreases the generation of excessive waste and recovers the full value of products; creating new business opportunities and revenue streams, while minimising the environmental impact of mining, resource extraction, refining and manufacturing ([Domenech, 2014](#)).

Diagram of the circular economy model. Image source: Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.



4.2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF REUSE

Choosing reusable over disposable items significantly reduces the environmental impact of your event. A single-use item is used once, for approximately 20 minutes and then disposed of, often incorrectly, lasting for hundreds of years in landfill. By choosing to reuse, you are directly reducing waste to landfill and lengthening the life of an item. The benefits to using reusable items are:

- Reduces the amount of waste to landfill
- Reduces the need for disposable items
- Allows products to be used over and over again
- Often uses safer materials (e.g. fossil fuels are needed to make plastic)
- Cost efficient
- Reduces the need for constant raw materials
- Helps reduce greenhouse gas pollution



TOP TIP:

Staff members can use the University's [Choose to Reuse Events service](#) to hire reusable items for events hosted on the Parkville campus.



Reusable items are available to hire from Union House on the Parkville campus.

If you have to choose disposable items, do it in the most sustainable way:

1. Choose items that can be recycled or compostable items that can go in the recycling (NOT Polylactic Acid (PLA) based bioplastics which can only be recycled if you have organised collection of the products).
2. Paper-based and cardboard products are the best. This way they have the greatest chance of being disposed of properly.
3. Have suitable organics and/or recycling bins at your event so you can separate directly at the event.
4. Think about engaging student volunteers (Waste Warriors) to educate your attendees on correct waste disposal and reduce recycling contamination. This can be organised through the Sustainability Team – see the next page for details.
5. Have clearly labelled bins.

4.2.3 BIN IT RIGHT

While recycling industries are currently undergoing massive changes to the way they operate, and as we begin making steps to start transitioning to a circular economy, it is still extremely important that we continue efforts to send any items that can be recycled to the correct facility.

At the University, this means it is important that staff and students understand which items can be placed in our **yellow mixed recycling bins**.

There are common misconceptions about what can go into which bin. Take a look at this list for the types of waste that you may see at events and which bin they should be put in:

Item	Recycling	Landfill
Paper-based containers/ plates	✓	
Rigid plastic containers/ plates	✓	
Speciality 'PLA-based bioplastic' containers, plates and other disposable food packaging		✓
Disposable coffee cups		✓
Plastic or bamboo cutlery (if paper-based they can go into a compost collection where available*)		✓
Straws (if paper-based they can go into a compost collection where available*)		✓
Napkins*		✓
Foil that covers food	Only if scrunched up into a loose fist-sized ball and free of food residue	

*Confused? These items can be composted at home, but not on campus through mainstream waste collection.



WHAT GOES IN THE RECYCLING BIN?

Mixed recycling bins are marked with yellow lids and/or signage and are used to collect the following waste items **ONLY**:

- Paper and cardboard (e.g. containers and handouts)
- Glass bottles and jars
- Hard plastic containers and bottles
- Tins and cans (do not crush cans before placing in the recycling)
- Aluminium foil (only if scrunched into a loose fist-sized ball and free of food residue)
- Plastic giveaways (only if they are the size of your fist or larger)

All other waste (excluding some speciality items such as [electronic waste](#)) are to be placed in red landfill bins.

For events, it is important that you provide enough bins for the waste and recycling that you expect to be generated. Each bin area should have clearly labelled receptacles.



TOP TIP:

Use the Sustainability Team's [sustainability posters](#) to label your bins.

Bin hire at the University

All rooms at the University contain standard sized waste and recycling bins. However, if you have a large indoor or outdoor event, extra bins can be hired through [Service Now](#) (staff only) to ensure bins are not over filled and rubbish is disposed of correctly.

Waste Warriors – student volunteers

As a way to contribute to a zero-waste campus, student volunteers can act as Waste Warriors, standing by bins helping attendees bin it right! With their help, you can reduce the level of contamination at your event and educate attendees on correct rubbish disposal.

Email sustainable-campus@unimelb.edu.au if you would like to request Waste Warriors at your next event.



TOP TIP:

Find out more about waste management on campus on [our website](#).

4.2.4 TIPS TO REDUCE SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

Plastic is a massive global waste problem. A great place to start reducing unnecessary waste is to avoid the **BIG FOUR** single-use plastic items at your next event: water bottles, straws, coffee cups and plastic bags.

If you were considering using one of the BIG FOUR at your next event, ask yourself: do you really need it? Hopefully the answer is no! Remember that according to the zero-waste hierarchy, REFUSING these items is the best action we can take. However, if they are a must, please consider environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic.

FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVES TO PLASTIC



Reusable water bottles
(UOM [branded](#))



Drinking water fountains
([campus map](#))



Reusable coffee cups
(UoM [branded KeepCups/ Swap Cup](#))



Tote bags/paper bags



Paper/reusable straws



DID YOU KNOW?

Australians use 2.7 billion plastic straws every year. Because straws are too small to be easily recycled, they often end up as litter on our beaches and in our oceans. In fact, plastic straws are one of the top ten most picked up items on beach cleans.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every day, Australians use 2.7 million takeaway coffee cups, which accumulates to 1 billion a year! Imagine the impact we could have if we all chose to bring our own coffee cup when we grabbed our daily dose of caffeine?

4.2.5 THE TRUE COST OF 'FREEBIES'

Giveaways, merchandise and promotional materials are a great way to share information and attract people to your event, but it's important to think about the impact and lifecycle of what you're handing out. These items are often temporary conveniences that come at a long-term cost to the environment; as they very quickly end up in landfill, or even worse, as litter in the environment (covered in YOUR branding).

The first question to ask yourself when considering if your event needs promotional materials is... do you really need it? If the answer is no, then problem solved; not having these items at all is the most sustainable option.

If the answer is yes, then really consider how the item will add to the experience of your event. **Remember;** useful, reusable and low impact products are going to be a much more sustainable option, and have more value for your delegates, compared to cheap plastic products which are produced with a high environmental and social cost and often break very easily.

Other considerations for sourcing promotional materials are:

- Are they manufactured locally and ethically?
- Do the items come wrapped in plastic or have unnecessary packaging?
- Will the items date quickly? **You can extend the use of promotional materials by not using specific event titles and/or dates.**
- How many will you really need? Over ordering is wasteful AND costly.
- Can you ask for items to be returned and reused (such as name tags and lanyards)?



TOP TIP:

Try to procure items with an environmental or social certification, such as [Forest Stewardship Council \(FSC\)](#), [Fairtrade](#) or [carbon neutral](#).



TOP TIP:

Try giving away items that support positive behaviour change (think [KeepCups](#), reusable bags or plants!)

If you are planning for an event that engages external stakeholders, such as partners or sponsors, make sure you discuss promotional materials with them as well. There's nothing worse than having all your good work undone when a sponsor starts giving away hundreds of useless pieces of plastic that litter the floor at the end of your event!



TOP TIP:

Running competitions with a single prize (such as an amazing experience, or free expertise such as an audit) is a fantastic alternative to giving away one or multiple items to each of your attendees.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR GIVEAWAYS



[Fairtrade cotton tote bags](#)

[Reusable water bottles](#)



[Reusable coffee cups](#)



[Environmentally friendly stationary](#)



[Alternate giveaways with gifts](#)

(planting a tree or sponsoring an animal in someone's name)



[Food and drink i.e. Fairtrade chocolates](#)



[Books](#)

(and get people to pass them on after they have read them)





4.2.6 GO PAPERLESS

Paper makes up the largest share of waste materials tossed out after events. If you've ever been to a conference, you probably left with printed handouts, flyers and pamphlets. Ask yourself, where is all that collateral now?

With a range of technology options now readily available, there is no reason why your next event can't go completely paperless, whether it's a small meeting or a large conference. The switch is easy if you follow these steps:

- Prepare materials that can be emailed to attendees prior to the event.
- Save electronic guides as PDFs that can be accessed from any device.
- Create a website/page for your event and let attendees know where to find it. You can do this by displaying a small number of large posters with QR codes to the site at the event.
- Create a digital registration/sign in process so that you can process attendees using a phone, iPad or laptop.
- Consider using or creating an event app (fantastic for larger events and expos). A basic version is often free.
- Have a hardcopy 'paper' version of the event guide at reception for those that are unable to access technology (but keep it pinned to the desk!).

TOP TIP:



Making sure there is accessible wi-fi at your event which will make going paperless a painless experience for you and your attendees.

If you do have to print information or materials, make sure it is a small amount with double-sided printing on [FSC accredited](#) or 100% recycled paper.

If you explain to delegates at your event (and in communications leading up to the event) why you have made these changes most of them will get on board and over time they will come to expect it as 'normal'.

4.2.7 DECORATIONS

Only your imagination is the limit when it comes to decorating your next event with sustainability in mind. There are a range of for-hire options available, as well as things you can create yourself to keep for your ongoing calendar of events.

Some important things to consider when decorating:

- Say no to balloons! Led by Zoos Victoria's "[When balloons fly, seabirds die](#)" campaign, the University of Melbourne has joined over 100 organisations by pledging to not use balloons at events. It's easy to replace balloons with [eco-friendly alternatives](#), such as bubble machines or bunting. Sign our [balloon free pledge](#).
- Consider investing in reusable decorative items such as banners, flags and bunting that you can use each time you run an event.
- Decorate with on trend pot plants instead of flower arrangements, which look great but are highly wasteful.
- Pot plants or fruit bowls also look great as table centrepieces!
- Use food as decorations as they are not only edible but also generate no waste.



TOP TIP:

Consider supporting the sharing of goods and services (hiring or leasing) as an alternative to buying.





4.3 EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Share your good work so everyone can see what it means to run a sustainable event and be inspired to showcase a sustainable event of their own.

BEFORE THE EVENT

- In all pre-event communications, advertise that your event is sustainable. For example, promote that it will be waste free, carbon neutral or it will have sustainable food options. Let attendees know how they can contribute (e.g. by bringing a reusable mug or water bottle).

DURING THE EVENT

- It is always good practice to welcome guests to your event and include an [Acknowledgement of Country](#) to recognise Indigenous Australian people as the original owners and custodians of the land and waters on which your events are held.
- Share how your event is sustainable and what that means.
- Have an introductory slide at the beginning of your event. Don't be shy to share this with others.
- Consider including a footnote on any digital (or printed) material (e.g. think before you print, or this is a zero-waste event).
- If you have any food menus or buffet stations, include sustainable food information (e.g. cooked with local produce).
- Bins stations are great locations to put up educational signs.
- Make sure you acknowledge all your achievements!

AFTER THE EVENT

- Once your event is over, send out follow up communications asking for feedback. This will help you to continuously

improve your event. Include data around the positive impact your event had, such as how much waste was diverted from landfill or how many food miles you saved using local produce. Refer participants to this guide to encourage them to run their own sustainable event.

GET REWARDED THROUGH GREEN IMPACT

By joining a [Green Impact team](#), you can get recognised for your sustainability efforts. Green Impact is a behaviour change and engagement program that encourages staff at the University to implement 'green-based' actions within their department from a bespoke toolkit of actions. There are actions within the toolkit that are specific to running a sustainable event. By taking part you can connect with other 'teams' around the University, receive accreditation points and get recognition for your achievements.

EMPOWER PARTICIPANTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By demonstrating a commitment to reducing your event's environmental footprint, you are also empowering others to do the same. Raise awareness about what you are doing to make a difference by publicising the information on your website, through social media and at the event. Show potential delegates that your organisation cares about the environment. Going paperless and plastic-free is a great start, as these are fairly easily to implement and keep track of.

DID YOU KNOW?

Showcasing how events can still be successful whilst adopting sustainable principles is one of the best ways to influence change.



4.4 REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF YOUR EVENT

Events can generate a large amount of greenhouse gas emissions, leaving behind a big carbon footprint. By being realistic about the potential carbon impact of your event, you can begin to identify areas where you can make reductions. In addition, you can look for ways to offset your impact by introducing a few green initiatives.

4.4.1 AVOID FLYING: CONSIDER VIDEO CONFERENCING/ONLINE EVENTS

One of the biggest contributors to an event's carbon footprint is travel, which accounts for about [90% of the carbon emissions](#) from an average event. It is one of the hardest parts of an event and the most contentious to make sustainable. However, it is possible to reduce the impact of your air travel by asking yourself the following questions. Not only does this reduce emissions via travel, but also means the event is available to a much wider audience:

- Is it absolutely necessary to travel to certain events?
- Can I reduce the number of overseas events I attend each year?
- Can I reduce the number of staff that attend the same event?
- Are there events that are accessible by teleconference?
- Are there events I can attend that are closer to home?

The number of events that are being run online has grown exponentially due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Despite the circumstances surrounding their growth in popularity, there are a large number of benefits to hosting online events. They are significantly more sustainable, as there is no need for catering or transport, and they also create the opportunity to engage a wider audience, including regional and global communities.

There are many types of interactive online events you can host. These include:

- Webinars and interactive video calls,
- Live-streaming via social media,
- Podcasts.

Zoom and social media are easy to use platforms to deliver your events.



TOP TIP:

The University offers infrastructure for teleconferencing and you are able to access the full features of Zoom through your university staff ID. Here are some tips on hosting [online meetings and events](#).

However, we know nothing beats meeting people face to face and a large part of an event is about personal networking. So if you do need to travel, consider:

- Choosing alternative transport, particularly public transport (bus, train and taxi),
- Offsetting any airmiles,
- Reducing the number of times you travel per year,
- Reducing the number of people that travel to the same event,
- If you are hosting an event where people will be physically attending make sure you look into energy saving measures at the venue. This includes heating and cooling, the running of audio-visual equipment and ensuring the venue has energy efficient lighting.

It is important when planning an event that you hold it in a venue accessible for all modes of transport, so flying isn't the only option. Look into eco-tourism companies that offer greener travel options.

4.4.2 TAKING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Hosting events in a central location and ensuring good public transport links is a key element for any sustainable event. Here are some things to [consider](#):

- Encourage attendees to travel by public transport, including trains and buses, and provide adequate end-of-trip facilities for those travelling by bike and other active modes of transport.
- Choose a venue in a central location that is easily accessible by public transport or provides adequate hotel options for less travel.
- If your venue is a little out of town, consider providing a shuttle bus service for delegates or offer a car sharing scheme to reduce single occupancy trips.

Check out our [Sustainability](#) website for more information on accessing our campuses.

DID YOU KNOW?

The events industry creates a significant amount of emissions from transporting attendees to events or between venues. According to the [Climate Council](#), transport emissions are the third biggest source of greenhouse gases for events in Australia with 50% from vehicles.

4.4.3 CARBON OFFSETTING

Carbon offsetting is how you can negate or offset the carbon dioxide emitted through your activities by purchasing 'units' from organisations that run carbon negative projects. These projects will often involve reforestation or renewable energy generation which contribute to reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Carbon offsetting compensates for carbon emissions produced by an activity such as air travel, food production, consumption and other energy intensive activities.

Carbon offsets do not prevent emissions occurring in the first place. It is important to remember that you should make every effort to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions first and wherever possible, before carbon offsetting. By following this guide you will be able to reduce the emissions produced at your event and the need to carbon offset.

GOOD LUCK

The Sustainability Team hopes that you found this Sustainable Events Guide useful. Be sure to use the **Sustainable Events Checklists** listed at the end of the guide (pages 26–31) to ensure you are ticking all the boxes when it comes to running sustainable events.

If you run a sustainable event, please email us at sustainable-campus@unimelb.edu.au and let us know how you went! If you have any questions regarding this guide or sustainable events in general, please do not hesitate to reach out.

5. SUMMARY OF AVAILABLE EVENTS SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE:

EVENTS HIRE

Infrastructure services can provide event items for hire including; a-frames, chairs, tables and umbrellas. Book now at the [Infrastructure Services Hire Site](#).

CHOOSE TO REUSE EVENTS SERVICE

Crockery and cutlery for events are available for hire at the Parkville campus. Find out more about the service and making a booking on the [Sustainability website](#).

BIN HIRE

To hire extra waste and recycling bins for your event, log a [Service Now](#) request (staff only). For organics bins, contact sustainable-campus@unimelb.edu.au.

BIN WARRIORS

Have student volunteers standing by the bins at your event to assist attendees to bin it right (for larger events only). Contact sustainable-campus@unimelb.edu.au to organise Bin Warriors.

CLEANING

Don't leave your rubbish mark! If you require extra cleaning after your event, log a request through [Service Now](#) (staff only).

BALLOON PLEDGE

Pledge to [go balloon free](#) at your next event and join a growing community at the University that is working towards a zero-waste campus.

TRAVEL

If you are required to travel by road for your event, consider using an electric vehicle from the [University's car fleet](#) (staff only) or use the car hire service '[Go Get](#)'.

GREEN IMPACT

If you'd like to get more involved with sustainable events across campus, and be supported in implementing green-based actions in your work place, join [Green Impact](#).

SUSTAINABLE EVENTS WORKSHOPS

Attend one of our sustainable events workshops to learn more about running a sustainable event. Check out all the Sustainability Team's events on the [Sustainability website](#).

EVENTS DATABASE

Register your event on the [Sustainable Events Database](#). This information will be used to determine the types of events that are run at the University of Melbourne and will support the Sustainability Team in embedding sustainability across all events.

If you have any questions or would like more support for running a sustainable event, contact the Sustainability Team at sustainable-campus@unimelb.edu.au.



6. REFERENCE LIST

- Balloons Blow. Environmentally friendly alternatives. Retrieved from <https://balloonsblow.org/environmentally-friendly-alternatives/>
- Clean Up Australia. (2019). The 2019 rubbish report. Retrieved from https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/ed061800/files/uploaded/NATIONAL_Rubbish%20Report_2019.pdf
- Climate Active. Retrieved from <https://www.climateactive.org.au/be-climate-active/certification>
- Cool Australia. (2013). High cost of bottled water. Retrieved from <https://www.coolaustralia.org/high-cost-bottled-water/>
- Doggett, T. (2018). Moral Vegetarianism. In E.N Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. CA: Stanford University.
- Domenech, T. (2014, July 15). Explainer: what is a circular economy. *The Conversation*, retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-a-circular-economy-29666>. Earthwatch. (2021, January). Retrieved from <https://earthwatch.org>
- Eco-Wiesn. (2021, January). Retrieved from <https://www.oktoberfest.de/en/magazine/eco-wiesn>
- Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand (FTANZ). (2020). Fairtrade. Retrieved from <https://fairtradeanz.org/for-consumers/products>
- Foodwise. (2020). Australia's food rescue charities. Retrieved from <https://www.foodwise.com.au/foodwaste/business-food-waste/food-charities/>
- Fresan, U. & Sabate, J. (2019). Vegetarian Diets: Planetary Health and Its Alignment with Human Health. *Advances in Nutrition*, 10 (4), 380-388.
- Glasgow 2014 Ltd. (2013). Procurement sustainability policy. Retrieved from http://www.glasgow2014.com/sites/default/files/documents/G2014-Procurement-Sustainability-Policy-FINAL-V2-070213_0.pdf
- Ilea, R.C. (2009). Intensive livestock farming: global trends, increased environment concerns and ethical solutions. *Journal of Agriculture and Environmental Ethics*, 22, 153-167.
- Kasier, K. (2014, December 8). Conferences and Carbon: The Impact Behind the Event. *Triple Pundit*, retrieved from <https://www.triplepundit.com/story/2014/conferences-and-carbon-impact-behind-event/58101>
- Melbourne Convention Bureau. Planning a sustainable event. Retrieved from https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/melbourne/Plan_a_sustainable_Event_Flyer_Final_7cb3ab0e-1b8b-49bf-b41e-64b4b9e4ccaa.pdf
- Mission statement: Bluesfest 2021. (2020, January). Retrieved from <https://www.bluesfest.com.au/mission-statement/>
- Natural Strategies Group. Sustainable Living Guide. Retrieved from <https://www.sustainablelivingguide.com.au/about>
- Sustainable Table. Retrieved from <https://sustainabletable.org.au/all-things-ethical-eating/ethical-meat-suppliers-directory/>
- Sustainability Victoria. (2018). *Victorian Local Government Annual Waste Services Report 2016-17*. Victoria: Sustainability Victoria.
- Sustainability Victoria. (2020). Top 10 tips for living sustainably. Retrieved from <https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/You-and-your-home/Live-sustainably/Top-10-tips-for-living-sustainably>
- Sustainability Victoria. (2020). Love food hate waste. Retrieved from <https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/campaigns/love-food-hate-waste>.
- The City of Melbourne. (2020). Carbon neutral events. Retrieved from <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/vision-goals/eco-city/Pages/carbon-neutral-events.aspx>
- The City of Melbourne. (2018). Social enterprise caterers that service the City of Melbourne. Retrieved from <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/sitecollectiondocuments/social-enterprise-caterers.pdf>
- The City of Melbourne. (2020). Carbon neutral operations. Retrieved from <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/vision-goals/eco-city/Pages/carbon-neutral-operations.aspx>
- The University of Melbourne. (2020). 2020 Sustainability Survey. Retrieved from <https://sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au/sustainability-commitment>
- Tilgals, J. Sustainability in action: 6 of the worlds most sustainable events. *Enhance Entertainment*. Retrieved from <https://enhanceentertainment.com.au/blog/sustainability-in-action-6-of-the-worlds-most-sustainable-events/>
- War on Waste 2018*, television series, Screen Australia and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, distributed by ABC, Australia.

SUSTAINABLE EVENT CHECKLIST:

MEETINGS/SMALL EVENTS (20–50 LOCAL ATTENDEES)

The University of Melbourne is committed to sustainability. Follow these simple steps to make your event as sustainable as possible:

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- ☐ Share/explain your sustainability efforts with attendees, pre, during and post event.
- ☐ Join [Green Impact](#) and check off toolkit actions for sustainable events.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

- ☐ Provide a water station with glasses instead of bottled water.
- ☐ Remind attendees to bring their own reusable water bottle and coffee cup.
- ☐ Provide reusable crockery and cutlery with food and eliminate single-use disposable items.
- ☐ Provide [Fairtrade/Rainforest Alliance/UTZ](#) tea and coffee.
- ☐ Provide locally sourced, low waste, healthy snacks.

FOOD WASTE

- ☐ Have a plan for leftover food.
- ☐ Collect food scraps and waste for composting. Compost bins are available at all campuses.

GENERAL WASTE

- ☐ Check that there are clearly labelled and accessible recycling and landfill bins.
- ☐ Circulate the agenda and/or meeting minutes via email.
- ☐ Create an electronic sign-in sheet (i.e. on Qualtrics).
- ☐ Record minutes using a laptop or iPad.
- ☐ Only print when absolutely necessary; on 100% recycled, double-sided paper.

Thank you for following this checklist to make your event sustainable. By doing so you are positively contributing to reducing your carbon footprint and helping raise awareness through sustainable behaviour.

This is checklist #1 in a series of 5, developed by the Sustainability Team, Campus Management for the University of Melbourne. For further information visit sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au

SUSTAINABLE EVENT CHECKLIST:

MEDIUM EVENTS (50–100 LOCAL ATTENDEES)

The University of Melbourne is committed to sustainability. Follow these simple steps to make your event as sustainable as possible:

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- ☐ Share/explain your sustainability efforts with attendees, pre, during and post event.
- ☐ Join [Green Impact](#) and check off toolkit actions for sustainable events.

SELECTING A VENUE

- ☐ Did the venue answer 'yes' to many of the questions asked in checklist #5?
- ☐ Is the venue centrally located or easily accessible?

SELECTING A CATERER

- ☐ Are they a social enterprise organisation?
- ☐ Do they source their produce seasonally, locally and ethically?
- ☐ Do they provide [Fairtrade](#), [UTZ](#), [Rainforest Alliance](#) or any other sustainable food options?
- ☐ Can they provide a good selection of vegetarian and vegan options?
- ☐ Do they partner with an organisation that collects and redistributes leftover food?
- ☐ Can they provide reusable crockery and cutlery?
- ☐ Can they reduce unnecessary waste and packaging wherever possible?

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

- ☐ Ensure at least 50% of the food is vegetarian (100% is even better!)
- ☐ Provide a water station with glasses instead of bottled water.
- ☐ Ensure all tea and coffee is [Fairtrade](#) or [Rainforest Alliance/UTZ](#) certified.
- ☐ Remind attendees to bring their own reusable water bottle and coffee cup.

- ☐ Provide reusable crockery and cutlery with food and eliminate single-use disposable items.
- ☐ Provide locally sourced, low waste, healthy snacks.

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

- ☐ Ask attendees to register, so you know exact catering requirements.
- ☐ Under order catering by 10%.
- ☐ Have a plan for leftover food.
- ☐ Collect food scraps and waste for composting. Compost bins are available at all campuses.

REDUCING WASTE

- ☐ **General:** Say no to plastic water bottles, straws, bags and coffee cups (BIG FOUR).
- ☐ **Bins:** Check they are clearly labelled and easily accessible (landfill and recycling bins).
- ☐ **Bins:** Do you need to order more bins from [Service Now](#) (staff only)?
- ☐ **Paperless:** Use Eventbrite for attendee registration and sign-in.
- Giveaways:** If you need freebies, giveaways or promotional materials, are they:
 - ☐ Sourced locally and ethically
 - ☐ Low impact
 - ☐ Useful/reusable?
- ☐ **Giveaways:** Have you discussed your requirements with partners/sponsors?

Thank you for following this checklist to make your event sustainable. By doing so you are positively contributing to reducing your carbon footprint and helping raise awareness through sustainable behaviour.

This is checklist #2 in a series of 5, developed by the Sustainability Team, Campus Management for the University of Melbourne. For further information visit sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au

SUSTAINABLE EVENT CHECKLIST:

LARGE EVENTS/CONFERENCES (+100 ATTENDEES)

The University of Melbourne is committed to sustainability. Follow these simple steps to make your event as sustainable as possible:

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- ☐ Share/explain your sustainability efforts with attendees, pre, during and post event.
- ☐ Join [Green Impact](#) and check off toolkit actions for sustainable events.

SELECTING A VENUE

- ☐ Did the venue answer 'yes' to many of the questions asked in checklist #5?
- ☐ Is the venue centrally located or easily accessible?

SELECTING A CATERER

- ☐ Are they a social enterprise organisation?
- ☐ Do they source their produce seasonally, locally and ethically?
- ☐ Do they provide [Fairtrade](#), [UTZ](#), [Rainforest Alliance](#) or any other sustainable food options?
- ☐ Can they provide a good selection of vegetarian and vegan options?
- ☐ Do they partner with an organisation that collects and redistributes leftover food?
- ☐ Can they provide reusable crockery and cutlery?
- ☐ Can they reduce unnecessary waste and packaging wherever possible?

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

- ☐ Ensure at least 50% of the food is vegetarian (100% is even better!)
- ☐ Have a plan for leftover food.
- ☐ Collect food scraps and waste for composting. Compost bins are available at all campuses.
- ☐ Provide a water station for attendees to fill up their own water bottles.
- ☐ Ensure all tea and coffee is [Fairtrade](#) or [Rainforest Alliance/UTZ](#) certified.
- ☐ Remind attendees to bring their own reusable water bottle and coffee cup.

REDUCING WASTE

- ☐ **General:** Say no to plastic water bottles, straws, bags and coffee cups (BIG FOUR).
- ☐ **Bins:** Check they are clearly labelled and easily accessible (landfill and recycling bins).
- ☐ **Bins:** Do you need to order more bins from [Service Now](#) (staff only)?
- ☐ **Paperless:** Use Eventbrite for attendee registration and sign-in.
- ☐ **Paperless:** Have you explored the feasibility of developing an event app?
- ☐ **Paperless:** Can you use digital signage to support the event?
- ☐ **Giveaways:** If you need freebies, giveaways or promotional materials, are they:
 - ☐ Sourced locally and ethically
 - ☐ Low impact
 - ☐ Useful/reusable?
- ☐ **Giveaways:** Have you discussed your requirements with partners/sponsors?

TRAVEL

- ☐ Ask attendees to use public transport, walk or ride to the event.
- ☐ Have the ticket cover the cost of public transport.
- ☐ Offer a carpool service, such as [Go Get](#).
- ☐ Make sure information about public transport is clear on the invitation/information booklet.
- ☐ Provide information or infrastructure on bike racks, bike storage areas or end-of-trip facilities to encourage active modes of travel.
- ☐ Organise shuttle buses to and from your event to the nearest public transport hub.
- ☐ Organise the event at a time that allows attendees to travel on public transport during peak times. A faster travel time will have less impact than a longer trip taken during off-peak times.
- ☐ Use hybrid cars or cars that use alternative fuels (consider using the [University's Car Fleet](#) – staff only) if needed.

Thank you for following this checklist to make your event sustainable. By doing so you are positively contributing to reducing your carbon footprint and helping raise awareness through sustainable behaviour.

This is checklist #3 in a series of 5, developed by the Sustainability Team, Campus Management for the University of Melbourne. For further information visit sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au

SUSTAINABLE EVENT CHECKLIST:

OUTDOOR FESTIVALS/EXPOS

The University of Melbourne is committed to sustainability. Follow these simple steps to make your event as sustainable as possible:

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- ☐ Share/explain your sustainability efforts with attendees, pre, during and post event.
- ☐ Join [Green Impact](#) and check off toolkit actions for sustainable events.

SELECTING A VENUE

- ☐ Did the venue answer 'yes' to many of the questions asked in checklist #5?
- ☐ Is the venue centrally located or easily accessible?

SELECTING A CATERER

- ☐ Are they a social enterprise organisation?
- ☐ Are they a local company?
- ☐ Do they have 'sustainable credentials'?
- ☐ Do they source their produce seasonally, locally and ethically?
- ☐ Do they provide [Fairtrade](#), [UTZ](#) or any other sustainable food options?
- ☐ Can they provide a good selection of vegetarian and vegan options?
- ☐ Do they partner with an organisation that collects and redistributes leftover food?
- ☐ Can they provide reusable crockery and cutlery?
- ☐ Can they reduce unnecessary waste and packaging wherever possible?

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

- ☐ Ensure at least 50% of the food is vegetarian (100% is even better!)
- ☐ Provide a water station instead of bottled water.
- ☐ Ensure all tea and coffee is [Fairtrade](#) or [Rainforest Alliance/UTZ](#) certified.
- ☐ Provide a water station for attendees to fill up their own water bottles.

- ☐ Remind attendees to bring their own reusable water bottle and coffee cup.

REDUCING WASTE

- ☐ **General:** Say no to plastic water bottles, straws, bags and coffee cups (BIG FOUR).
- ☐ **General:** If you require disposable cutlery and crockery, consider what the products are made of (see [section 4.2.2](#) of this report).
- ☐ **Bins:** Provide adequate bins and bin streams (e.g. waste, recycling and organics).
- ☐ **Bins:** Check they are clearly labelled and easily accessible (landfill and recycling bins).
- ☐ **Bins:** Do you need to order more bins from [Service Now](#) (staff only)?
- ☐ **Paperless:** Use Eventbrite for attendee registration and sign-in.
- ☐ **Paperless:** Have you explored the feasibility of developing an event app?
- ☐ **Paperless:** Can you use digital signage to support the event?
- Giveaways:** If you need freebies, giveaways or promotional materials, are they:
 - ☐ Sourced locally and ethically
 - ☐ Low impact
 - ☐ Useful/reusable?
- ☐ **Giveaways:** Have you discussed your requirements with partners/sponsors?

TRAVEL

- ☐ Ask attendees to use public transport, walk or ride to the event.
- ☐ Have the ticket cover the cost of public transport.
- ☐ Offer a carpool service, such as [Go Get](#).
- ☐ Make sure information about public transport is clear on the invitation/information booklet.
- ☐ Provide information or infrastructure on bike racks, bike storage areas or end-of-trip facilities to encourage active modes of travel.

- ☐ Organise shuttle buses to and from your event to the nearest public transport hub.
- ☐ Organise the event at a time that allows attendees to travel on public transport during peak times. A faster travel time will have less impact than a longer trip taken during off-peak times.
- ☐ Use hybrid cars or cars that use alternative fuels (consider using the [University's Car Fleet](#) – staff only) if needed.

WHEN CONSIDERING A PROVIDER FOR AIR TRAVEL

- ☐ Where possible, book direct flights.
- ☐ Fly economy class (business class has higher emissions per seat).
- ☐ Choose an airline that are active in their green policy and click to offset your emissions when you book.
- ☐ Offset your carbon emissions when you book your flight or travel.

Thank you for following this checklist to make your event sustainable. By doing so you are positively contributing to reducing your carbon footprint and helping raise awareness through sustainable behaviour.

This is checklist #4 in a series of 5, developed by the Sustainability Team, Campus Management for the University of Melbourne. For further information visit sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au

SUSTAINABLE EVENT CHECKLIST:

CHOOSING A VENUE

The first step to hosting a sustainable event is to pick the right venue, which will be determined by a number of factors. If you're looking for a venue located off campus, we've put together some questions you can ask venue managers to help you select the most sustainable option.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- ☐ Does the venue have a Sustainability and/or Corporate Social Responsibility policy?
- ☐ Does the venue have an Environmental Management Plan (EMP)?
- ☐ Does the venue have any noteworthy sustainability accolades or credentials?
- ☐ Is the venue certified [carbon neutral](#)?
- ☐ Does the venue promote their sustainability efforts?

ENERGY

- ☐ Does the venue source energy from a sustainable energy provider?
- ☐ Does the venue have any solar panels?
- ☐ Does the venue have energy efficient lighting, equipment and ventilation?
- ☐ Do all the function rooms have access to natural light and ventilation?

REDUCING WASTE

- ☐ Does the venue have facilities to sort waste (minimum landfill and mixed recycling)?
- ☐ Does the venue have an organic waste facility, donate food that isn't eaten or simply recycle its food waste?
- ☐ Does the venue have access to/provide reusable crockery and cutlery?
- ☐ Does the venue avoid unnecessary giveaways (table pens/paper, individually wrapped mints/lollies)?
- ☐ Does the venue try to reduce its paper printing and single-use decorative items? Does the venue use upcycled or recycled products and materials?

IN-HOUSE CATERING

- ☐ Does the venue provide vegetarian, local and seasonal catering options?
- ☐ Does the venue source sustainable tea, coffee, sugar and chocolate products ([Fairtrade](#))?
- ☐ Does the venue avoid single-use food service items (cups, plates, bowls and cutlery)?
- ☐ Does the venue provide a condiments station rather than individual packaged items (sugar, salt, pepper, sauces, butter, jams etc)?

WATER

- ☐ Are there water stations accessible for people to fill their own bottles?
- ☐ Does the venue provide table water in jugs and glasses instead of bottled water?
- ☐ Does the venue have dual flush toilets and use water efficient appliances?
- ☐ Does the venue collect and use rainwater and/or greywater?

TRANSPORT

- ☐ Is the venue easily accessible by public transport?
- ☐ Does the venue have bicycle parking facilities?
- ☐ Does the venue have any end-of-trip facilities accessible to attendees?

Being aware, able to embrace and promote any of these activities is good for your event but also lets the venue know that you value these things. The more potential customers that want a sustainable venue the more they will be open to adopting more sustainable practices!

Thank you for following this checklist to make your event sustainable. By doing so you are positively contributing to reducing your carbon footprint and helping raise awareness through sustainable behaviour.

This is checklist #5 in a series of 5, developed by the Sustainability Team, Campus Management for the University of Melbourne. For further information visit sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au

FIND OUT MORE

Sustainability, Campus Management

sustainable-campus@unimelb.edu.au

sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au