

Sustainable Event Management Plan Guidelines

Shellharbour City Council is committed to ensuring all events held in the Shellharbour LGA are organised and conducted in a sustainable manner.

Council's Sustainable Events Management Policy encourages all event organisers to develop a Sustainable Event Management Plan for any event held in the Shellharbour LGA.

A Sustainable Events Management Plan is mandatory requirement for all events/activities proposed to be held on Public Land under Council's Management and Control. This must be submitted with all Local Approvals or Application for Temporary Licence documentation.

The following guidelines have been developed to assist with the completion of your Sustainable Events Management Plan. They provide further information on each of the sustainability areas you must address in your Sustainable Events Management Plan. If you need further assistance completing your Plan please contact Council on 4221 6111.

1. Venue/Location Selection

The choice of venue or location is critical for running a sustainable event as it not only dictates how the event is run but how people can access the event.

- **Consider whether the use of tele- or web- conferencing may negate the need for an event to be run**

Small scale events such as meetings or conferences may not require all participants to be physically located in the same space. Tele- or web- conferencing allows participants to share ideas from separate venues, saving transport related emissions. The use of these technologies may be particularly useful where participants are located some distance from the organiser.

- **Investigate the environmental credentials of potential venues before selection**

Prioritise venues that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability through the following:

- Installation of water and energy saving devices/technologies (eg. solar power, water tank, water efficient fixtures, energy efficient lighting).
- Use of accredited Green Power
- Dedicated natural areas to support local biodiversity and the natural environment
- Diversion of food waste from landfill
- Recycling service in place

- **Consider the proximity of your event to public transport options**

Maximise the use of public transport by selecting a venue that is close to public transport.

- **Select a venue of appropriate size to reflect the requirements and number of attendees**

If planning an indoor event, try to accurately estimate expected numbers, duration and number of rooms required to ensure the correct space and time has been allocated for your event.

- **If catering must be provided by the selected venue ensure that the catering guidelines outlined below are appropriately considered**

Refer to catering guidelines in section 4.

- **Before selecting a venue ensure it has appropriate waste minimisation and reduction procedures in place**

Refer to waste guidelines in section 5.

2. Transport

Transport is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. There are a range of sustainable transport options available for organisers and event participants.

- **Encourage shared transport options including car pooling and public transport**

Ensure promotional materials highlight shared transport options available to participants. Where possible provide timetable information for public transport options. Contact details for local public transport operators include:

Buses:	Premier Illawarra	13 34 10
Taxis:	Radio Cabs of Wollongong	4229 9311
	Kiama Cabs & Hire Cars	4237 7505
Trains:	CityRail Infoline	13 15 00

Maps of the local area can be found at Whereis™ Directions - www.whereis.com or in the yellow pages.

- **Encourage riding or walking to the event**

Ensure promotional materials encourage participants to ride or walk to the event if they only have a short distance to travel.

Provide information on local cycle path and bicycle safety information. This information can be found on the following websites:

Bicycle NSW:	www.bicyclensw.org.au
Roads & Traffic Authority:	www.rta.nsw.gov.au (search for 'bicycles' & 'cycleway maps')
Shellharbour Council website:	www.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au (search for 'bicycles')

To access a map showing Shared Use Paths in Shellharbour visit:

<http://www.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au/filedata/pdf/ShellharbourLGASharedUsePathStrategy2010.pdf>

3. Equipment and Supplies

Equipment and supplies made of resource intensive materials often travel large distances before finally being put to use. It is important to consider the lifecycle of equipment and supplies associated with an event to ensure sustainable purchasing decisions are made.

- **Before purchasing equipment and supplies consider:**

- What is the item made of?
- Where has the item been made?
- Level of packaging?
- How will the item be used?
- What is the expected lifespan of the item?
- Are there opportunities for reuse? If so, what are they?
- How will the product be disposed of at the end of its life?

Organisers should choose equipment and supplies that have as many of the following attributes as possible:

- Are made of recycled and/or organic materials
- Are made locally
- Have minimal packaging
- Its use will have a minimal impact on the environment
- Are quality, durable products
- Are reusable
- Can be recycled or is biodegradable

- **Ask for details of all giveaway materials to be offered by vendors prior to the event**

Event organisers should request information from vendors prior to the event to find out what giveaway materials they will be offering during the event. Giveaway materials should be assessed against the same criteria outlined above (for equipment and supplies) before final approval is given for these materials to be made available at the event.

- **Minimise the amount of printed material available during your event**

It can be difficult to estimate the amount of printed material needed for an event. This can often lead to large amounts of paper waste. To minimise paper waste at your events:

- Use power point presentations to display information rather than providing paper copies to all attendees.
- Advise attendees that printed materials will be available electronically on your website immediately after the event for anyone that wishes to download a copy,
- Collect email addresses of attendees who are interested in receiving electronic copies of resources discussed throughout the event and email this information after the event.

- **Where printing is required make smarter printing choices**

Halve the amount of paper used for printing by printing on both sides.

When it comes to buying paper the 'recyclable' symbol does not mean too much since almost all paper is recyclable. It is important to look for the 'recycled' symbol to encourage manufacturers to close the loop.



This symbol means that the product is made from material that has been used before. The more *post-consumer* recycled content the better. If there is no qualifying statement (e.g. "60% post consumer recycled content") then the symbol means the product is made of 100% recycled materials.

Recycled



Recyclable only means that a material or product can be recycled. It does not necessarily contain recycled material.

Recyclable

- **Prohibit the use of polystyrene products and plastic bags and ensure vendors are aware of this ban**

Polystyrene products and plastic bags are a serious threat to our environment and natural resources. Not only do they spoil our natural areas but they can also take up to 1000 years to break down.

Banning the use of polystyrene products and plastic bags is a simple way to reduce the environmental impact of your event. You must tell all vendors of this ban prior to the event to give them an opportunity to arrange suitable alternatives to these products.

4. Catering

The production of food can have a very high environmental cost. Selecting an appropriate food type and quantity of food are some of the most important elements of a sustainable event.

- **Consideration should be given to providing food options which:**
 - **Are in season (i.e. oranges are in season from winter through to summer)**

Selecting foods which are in season is a great way to reduce the environmental cost associated with catering for your event. This is because produce which is in season tends also to be local food, which means the greenhouse gas emissions associated with transporting and storing your food will be much lower than out-of-season alternatives.

- **Are organic and/or FairTrade**



Products which possess the Australian Certified Organic (ACO) label are those which have passed standards set by Australian's largest certifier for organic produce.

ACO's standards place great importance on building and maintaining healthy soil, nutritious crops and animal welfare.

By purchasing products with this logo you can be assured that you are getting products that comply with national standards for organic farming and processing. There are a wide variety of food products which contain this certification including fruit, vegetables, nuts, cereals, legumes and meat products. To find out more visit www.australianorganic.com.au.



The Fairtrade Mark is an independent consumer label which appears on a variety of products providing an independent guarantee that disadvantaged producers in the developing world get a better deal.

Common Fairtrade Certified food products that are available in Australia include coffee, tea, chocolate, cotton, rice, and sugar. These products are available through supermarkets, whole food and health food shops, specialty retailers, cafes, and Fair Traders of Australia.

To find out more about Fairtrade and where to buy Fairtrade products [visit www.fta.org.au](http://www.fta.org.au).

- **Focus on healthy options such as fruits, vegetables, pulses and nuts.**

It is important to offer healthy food options to event patrons. This not only creates a positive health image but assists in the sustainable disposal of food waste as healthy food options are more readily compostable.

- **Are locally produced**

When your food travels around the world to get to you, it uses a large amount of energy generating a large amount of greenhouse gases. It's not just the distance it's also the refrigeration along the way and the energy that goes into packaging the food for the journey and storing it when it arrives. Purchasing locally produced foods will greatly reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with catering for your event.

- **Are from non-genetically modified sources**

Genetically modified foods are those which have been manipulated or engineered by humans to enable specific traits to be transferred from one organism to another.

Genetic engineering is a relatively new area of science and as such the full effects of this technology is not fully understood. To date a wide range of health, environmental, social and ethical concerns have been raised by scientists, community groups and members of the public.

Since December 2002, the law in Australia requires that food labels must show if food has been genetically modified or contains genetically modified ingredients, or whether GM additives or processing aids remain in the final food product. You will find the statement 'genetically modified' on the label either next to the name of the food, for example *genetically modified soy beans*, or in association with the specific ingredient in the ingredient list, for example: *flour, soy (genetically modified)*.

Look for these labels when purchasing food products for your event.

- **If fish is being served consult the Australian Marine Societies Sustainable Seafood Guide for preferred options**

Overfishing, destructive fishing gear and poor aquaculture practices impact significantly on our seas, marine wildlife and habitats. An incredible 80% of the world's fish stocks are now over-exploited or fished right up to their limit.

As consumers we can make a difference through sustainable seafood choices. The Australian Marine Conservation Society has developed an online tool to help you select sustainable seafood options. To access this tool go to <http://www.marineconservation.org.au> (search for 'sustainable seafood guide').

- **Use reusable serving ware (plates, cups, cutlery etc.) Alternatively source serving ware that is made of compostable material**

Non-disposal serving ware should be used in preference to single use serving ware such as paper plates and plastic cutlery. Ensure these materials are available from your venue of choice.

If non-disposal serving ware is not available you may wish to purchase and provide compostable serving ware made out of materials such as bamboo. Please be aware that compostable serving ware will only benefit the environment if composted after use rather than being thrown in the general rubbish bin. It is important to provide appropriate facilities for attendees to compost items after use.

Alternatively if plastic serving ware is used, please ensure that it is recycled.

- **Provide jugs and glasses for water instead of bottled water where appropriate**

Over 60,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas are produced each year in the packaging, shopping and refrigerating of bottled water to Australia. Where clean drinking water is available consider offering jugs of water to attendees at smaller events rather than using bottled water.

- **Encourage attendees of outdoor events to bring their own water bottle and provide stations for filling water bottles**

For larger events consider providing fillings stations to allow attendees to refill their own water bottle. For this to work effectively you will need to advertise the availability of filling stations in promotional material distributed prior to the event.

5. Waste Management

Events can generate large amounts of waste. It is essential to have in place processes to allow reasonable levels of recovery for the waste that is produced.

- **Waste Disposal**

As the organiser of the event you are responsible for putting in place systems for the disposal and recovery of any waste that is generated. These systems should aim to recover recyclable materials and avoid the unnecessary disposal of waste to landfill.

You are required to specify the number of garbage and recycling bins that will be provided at your event (if you require assistance in determining numbers please contact Council's Waste Services Department).

An agreement will need to be arranged between yourself and a private waste contractor for both the supply of bins and disposal of the waste collected. Evidence of the agreement will need to be provided with your plan.

As the event coordinator you must ensure the cleanliness of the site and ensure it is left in a satisfactory condition at the conclusion of your event.

- **Bin Locations**

A map of bin locations will also need to be included with your plan. This can be incorporated into the site plan which is required to be submitted with your Local Approval.

- **Additional options for sustainable waste management**

Depending on the nature and size of your event there may be an opportunity to collect larger quantities of food waste for local free meal providers or smaller quantities of food waste for composting. Please consider these additional options when organising your event.

6. Event Promotion

Promoting your event can be resource intensive. Organisers must consider a range of options to minimise the use of printed materials.

- **Consider whether printed promotional materials are the most effective form of communication before printing**

When planning promotional materials, consider who the target audience is and what the best way is to reach them. Consider whether the following promotional strategies would be effective ways to invite guests/ attract attendees to your event:

- Distributing information via email networks
- Posting information on the web (either on your website or the website of a related organisation or community group)
- Displaying reusable signage/banners in areas of high visibility
- Inserting a paid ad or media release in your local paper rather than producing printed material such as flyers or leaflets
- Investigating opportunities to advertise via free community forums such as ABC radio.
- Investigating the use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter
- Using reusable promotional materials such as signage/banners with removable dates
- Using online systems for taking bookings and managing event related enquiries.

Avoid printing copious amounts of printed material.

- **Promote the sustainability of your event wherever possible**

Consider using the following methods to promote the sustainability of your event:

- Make PA announcements to let attendees know about the sustainability measures that have been put in place for your event. These may include the provision of organic, fair trade and/or local foods, recycling bins, composting collection points, water filling stations etc.
- Clearly label all sustainability measures e.g. signs on bins, signs indicating when food is organic, fair-trade and/or local
- Include information on sustainability measures in promotional materials and media opportunities.

7. Water and Energy Use

Events can be high water and energy consumers. It is important to develop measures to minimise water and energy use and to let vendors and participants know of these measures.

- **Consider ways to save energy**

Wherever possible use natural ventilation instead of air conditioning. Reduce unnecessary power use by ensuring lights and equipment are switched off after use. Check all equipment is turned off at the power point when not in use.

- **Consider the source of energy used**

Purchasing GreenPower is a great way to offset the greenhouse gas emissions associated with an event. GreenPower is energy that is sourced from renewable energy sources like wind power, solar, mini-hydro and biomass. For further information on purchasing GreenPower for your event visit: <http://www.greenpower.gov.au/your-events.aspx>

- **Consider ways to save water during the event**

Catering and cleaning are high water using activities at events. Consider ways to save water use during these and other activities.

- **Ensure that event organisers are familiar with how to efficiently operate all equipment**

Nominate an individual or group who will be responsible for eliminating unnecessary power and water use. They will need to familiarise themselves with the venue and how to use all equipment prior to the event. Alternatively identify a staff member from the venue who will be present during the entire event to assist with efficient operation of the venue.

- **Ensure that all vendors are aware of any additional water and energy conservation measures in place**

Identified opportunities to save water and energy must be communicated to all vendors prior to the event. An onsite induction may also help to explain the measures put in place to reduce water consumption throughout the event.