

Why sustainable events matter

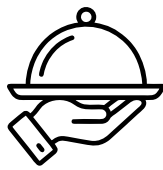
Events can generate significant waste, emissions, food loss and unnecessary procurement. They also create opportunities to influence behaviour, support local businesses, improve accessibility and demonstrate leadership.

Whether your event is small or large, in-person, hybrid or virtual, practical choices can reduce impact without reducing quality.

This checklist helps you identify meaningful actions across common event themed areas and understand whether your event may be ready for ACTS Sustainable Event Certification.



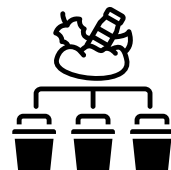
Diversity & Inclusion



Catering



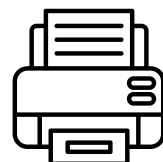
Catering Waste



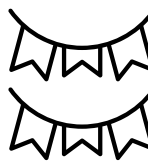
Waste



Venue, Transport & Carbon



Printing & Signage



Event Styling



Raising Awareness



Diversity and Inclusion

A truly sustainable event is one that welcomes participation from all people. Accessibility, cultural respect and inclusive design improve attendee experience and social outcomes.

- ☐ Ask attendees about accessibility needs during registration
- ☐ Plan adjustments in advance
- ☐ Ensure venue/platform accessibility
- ☐ Include Acknowledgement of Country or relevant cultural welcome
- ☐ Offer multiple ways to participate (in-person / virtual)



Catering

Food choices strongly influence an event's carbon footprint, waste generation and supply chain impacts.

- ☐ Use local caterers, such as social enterprise or Indigenous businesses
- ☐ Minimum 50% vegetarian or vegan menu
- ☐ Aim for 100% plant-based where possible
- ☐ Collect dietary requirements during registration
- ☐ Order accurately to reduce waste
- ☐ Use Fairtrade / ethical tea, coffee and snacks



Catering Waste

Single-use serveware and food waste are common event impacts, but highly preventable. Compostable alternatives are often seen as the sustainable option, but they are usually more expensive and only beneficial when separately collected and commercially composted. Reusables are usually the better choice.

- ☐ Reusable cups, plates and cutlery only
- ☐ No bottled water
- ☐ Refill stations available
- ☐ Bulk condiments, no sachets
- ☐ Low-waste packaging requested from caterers
- ☐ Food donation / compost plan in place



Waste

Without clear systems, recyclable and compostable materials often go to landfill. Clear instructions and well-designed waste stations help divert materials from landfill.

- ☐ Waste, recycling and organics bins provided
- ☐ Clear signage at all stations and bins grouped together
- ☐ Waste volunteers for larger events
- ☐ Attendees educated on correct disposal





Venue, Transport & Carbon Footprint

Travel is often the largest source of event emissions. Venue selection also shapes energy use, waste systems and attendee travel behaviour.

- ☐ Choose venue near public transport
- ☐ Promote walking, cycling and public transport in event communications
- ☐ Offer hybrid attendance where practical
- ☐ Discourage unnecessary flights
- ☐ Provide carbon offset information for attendees
- ☐ Select venues with sustainability credentials
- ☐ Use efficient AV / correctly-sized equipment



Printing & Signage

Digital alternatives and reusable signage can often deliver the same information with far less impact than printed materials.

- ☐ Digital registration/sign-in used
- ☐ QR codes replace handouts
- ☐ Printing minimised
- ☐ FSC/recycled paper if needed
- ☐ No lamination
- ☐ Undated signage for reuse



Event styling

Decor can be high waste and short-lived. Reusable styling creates impact without landfill.

- ☐ Ensure no balloons or single-use décor are used. Hire or borrow styling items instead
- ☐ Only reusable banners/signage used
- ☐ Use fabric tablecloths instead of disposable covers
- ☐ No not use cut flowers. Consider alternatives like pot plants





Raising Awareness

Events can inspire behaviour change and normalise better practices.

- ☐ Promote sustainability before the event
- ☐ Share sustainable actions during opening remarks
- ☐ Encourage attendee participation
- ☐ Report outcomes after the event
- ☐ Celebrate wins and lessons learned

Are you ready for certification?

If you ticked:

15+ actions

Your event has strong sustainability foundations. Consider what more you can action to further reduce the environmental and social impact of your event.

25+ actions

Likely aligned with many 1-Star sustainable event requirements ★

35+ actions

Strong candidate for higher sustainable event certification levels ★★

WANT FORMAL RECOGNITION?

ACTS Sustainable Event Certification independently verifies your sustainability actions through evidence review and audit.



Whether you're hosting a conference, workshop, or seminar, our step-by-step toolkit will support you to reduce environmental impact, enhance inclusivity, and track your progress as you plan your event.

[Register your next event here](#) or [learn more!](#)



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