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Sustainability Guide for GA2023

1 Introduction

This Sustainability Guide aims to assist sustainable organisation of GA2023, from planning and choice of venue, to event promotion and catering, and to make savings in energy and waste. Following are recommendations:

Social sustainability

- Ensure accessibility, inclusion and well-being of all participants and staff
- Develop ways of ensuring that all participants feel they can contribute to events
- Ensure different social and interest groups are included in events
- Encourage ICOMOS and community volunteering for social inclusivity and outreach
- Encourage young professional involvement
- Support social enterprises or local businesses where possible
- Ensure the venue is physically accessible to all
- Invite those with sight and hearing difficulties to sit up front. Provide sound amplification where required

Energy

- Ensure Trade Exhibition areas use minimal power for lighting.
- Keep the heating and air-conditioning at a set temperature in rooms. (Rec. range:19-26°C).
- Maximise use of natural light during the day.
- Ensure that lights will be turned off in areas of the venue when not in use for the conference.
- Ensure equipment is in energy-saving mode when not in use
- Power events by green energy (100% renewables) where possible (consider sponsorship).
- **Pre or Post event energy auditing** – if a public or large events venue, ask them to either give a reliable estimate of the power or calculate the actual amount of energy used for the event (if they are not already purchasing green energy). After event, purchase Green Power Certificates to cover power that the event has used to help make the event carbon neutral.

Travel and transport

- Consider virtual conferencing; making a webinar.
- Encourage purchasing of carbon offsets for travel to and from the event.
- Ensure travel and access to events and venues includes and prioritises public transport
- Promote use of public transport by providing directions, appropriate train, bus and light rail timetables, maps/details of shuttle buses or carpooling schemes on website.
- Provide information on how to sign up for Opal card for out-of-town conference participants
- Notify of bicycle storage areas, and provide links to bicycle routes
- When no public transport option is available, provide shuttle bus/car-pooling



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Accommodation

- Give preference to accommodation with environmental performance credentials and/or and proximity to the venue
- Consider hotels who support social enterprises

Event promotion and sponsors

- Put the Sustainability Policy on the event website and promote the event as socially and environmentally responsible (e.g. 'car-free' or 'carbon neutral'). Post signage where relevant.
- Seek ethical and sustainable sponsorship as a preference
- Electronic communication is the preferred method throughout the planning of the conference. Use email, online systems or SMS services for registration of events, advertising and confirmation to minimise printed material.
- Minimise conference hand-outs and provide electronic version for participants utilising personal electronic devices e.g. provide links to a website from which notes and presentations can be downloaded
- Promote 'paperless'. How many people really look at flyers anymore? Digital promotion is often cheaper and more effective without the environmental impacts of excess printing.
- Do not provide 'show bags' or copious promotional material at the event and encourage participating organisations to comply. If show bags are provided, they should be made from reusable materials, preferably by social enterprises e.g. Indigenous groups (See GA2023 'Aboriginal Procurement Policy'), sheltered workshops.
- Conference gifts to be selected for their usefulness and reuse potential. The contents of show bags should not be made from plastic. Don't hand out giveaways that just end up in the rubbish bin. Use giveaways that someone will want to keep and/or a service or consumable such as coupons, tickets, food, etc. When promotional material is needed, provide products that are made from sustainable material, such as pens with bamboo, cardboard or 100% recycled plastic casings, and items with recycled content such as 100% recycled paper notebooks, etc.
- Where printing is required, print on both sides of the paper and use post-consumer recycled content paper. All printers and copiers to have a double-sided printing capability

Catering

- Provide Fairtrade food and beverage options, including tea, coffee, sugar and chocolate
- Use Indigenous caterers (See GA2023 'Aboriginal Procurement Policy') or social enterprise caterers whenever possible
- Provide reusable cutlery, crockery, glassware and napkins or, if unavailable, compostable paper or bamboo-based items
- Use tap water instead of bottled water
- Remove straws from drinks and counters and provide only when requested – Compostable or paper straws are a good alternative to plastic for drinks that require a straw
- Do not provide single use stirrers



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- Consider your food choices: provide a large range of locally sourced, vegetarian choices that minimise environmental footprint
- Save money by featuring foods that are in season and by purchasing food in bulk (not individually packaged) to reduce waste
- Consider providing finger food for events to reduce the need for serve ware and utensils.
- Serve condiments in large dispensers rather than individual sachets. Limit individually wrapped items like sugar packets to avoid waste
- Ensure catering quantities are based on the number of RSVPs received

Recycling and Waste Management

The waste hierarchy in order of preference is: avoid use, reduce use, reuse, recycle:

- Avoid plastic and plastic bags. Please note that biodegradable plastic is not always compostable, even when made from plant-based materials
- Reduce packaging material; ensure packaging materials used are reusable or recyclable
- Minimise name tag use; re-use old name tag holders; collect unwanted name tags after event
- Ask delegates for any special dietary requirement to reduce food waste
- Plan ahead and arrange with local community groups and social enterprises for pick-up of surplus food (e.g. [FareShare](#), [OzHarvest](#)), or compost where feasible

Liaise with the Venue to:

- Provide bins for general waste, recyclables and organic waste at various locations
- Also provide bins for 'back of house' (e.g. for stallholders)
- Ensure recycling bins are positioned appropriately, with adequate signage. NB. biodegradable plastic is not always compostable, even when made from plant-based materials, and cannot always be recycled (e.g. cannot be recycled in City of Sydney yellow bins)

Reporting

- Wherever practicable, sustainability efforts and greenhouse gas reductions are to be monitored, quantified, displayed and advertised throughout the event and in event material (and post-event material where relevant), for participants to view actual savings.
- Put a reporting system in place that allows for the communication, assessment and evaluation of sustainable event processes, initiatives and results.