

# Green Business Events

Whether you're holding a conference in your front boardroom or running a large-scale trade show, there are steps you can take to ensure your business event is environmentally sustainable.

Often the best place to start is with a written policy that encourages all suppliers and event managers to behave sustainably. But there is more you can do. This fact sheet outlines how to create a policy for being green and the simple ways in which you can achieve sustainability at your business events.

## Tips for Green Business Events

Establish green policies when planning your event

- > Prepare a written environmental policy for your event which can be shared with suppliers, delegates and speakers
- > Estimate the total carbon footprint and plan to offset the carbon emissions produced at the event. Detail this in your costing so it is clear to the client
- > Look at past event energy use and wastage and find ways of reducing this. Track your results after the event
- > Plan your event precisely (looking at numbers, duration, size of venue and number of rooms required) then select the right venue to fit, so you use minimal energy and resources
- > Ensure your tender clearly states your commitment to the environment and request all respondents to outline their policies
- > Establish a policy that encourages all suppliers to submit proposals and quotes electronically
- > In all communications with exhibitors and contractors request that waste and packaging be reduced

## Travelling to the event

- > Consider using airlines that offer carbon offset programs
- > Travel with companies that are implementing green policies
- > Fly visitors by the shortest route possible, not just the most affordable
- > Choose a venue that is easily accessible by public transport or by foot
- > Accurately monitor the number of delegates needing transport at each stage of the event and match this to the transport and vehicle size

- > Offer day or weekly traveller tickets to promote public transport use
- > Use delegate shuttles, and where possible, use hybrid vehicles
- > Consider bike use by providing bike racks and a bike concierge
- > Reduce site inspections and use local scouts to gather information
- > Offset carbon emissions for transport

## Selecting a venue

- > Give preference to venues with sound environmental policies
- > Work with the venue to ensure lights and air conditioning are switched off when not in use
- > Consider venues that use 100 per cent accredited GreenPower and that can be accessed by public transport
- > Choose venues that have environmental accreditation eg. Green Star ratings or Green Globe accreditation
- > Consider venues that use as much natural light and natural ventilation as possible
- > Find out if the venue is taking steps to improve or establish its accreditation
- > Ensure the venue has good waste reduction procedures and uses biodegradable supplies
- > Ensure the venue supplies separate bins for delegates to be active recyclers

## Choosing accommodation for delegates

- > Use or recommend hotels within walking distance of the venue and with proactive waste, water and energy management practices

## Power and water supply

- > Ensure all equipment is turned off at night, especially when at exhibitions
- > Investigate alternatives to air conditioning during the event
- > Hold the event during the day to utilise natural light and reduce power consumption

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## Food and beverages

- > Ask to see the green policy of the hotel or caterer
- > Aim to reduce food miles by using local rather than imported food and beverage supplies
- > Plan menus using in-season, fresh, local, organic food
- > Request fair trade food suppliers
- > Avoid unnecessary packaging and plastic bags
- > Ask caterers to provide reusable table cloths, crockery and cutlery
- > Use water glasses plus jugs with tap water
- > Where possible use bulk dispensers for sugar, salt, condiments and sauces. Avoid individually wrapped sweets
- > Ask delegates to sign up for meals in advance to avoid food wastage
- > Allow attendees to pre-select a meal size, offering smaller meal options

## Printed material and information

- > Use new media and electronic technology to reduce paper use
- > Collect and reuse name badges
- > Offer electronic registration and market electronically via website and email
- > Offer all relevant information, presentations, papers and web links via electronic media
- > Consider requesting delegates to bring their own pens and note pads
- > Consider SMS to give seating and registration details

## Waste reduction and recycling

- > Reduce waste by keeping track of attendance and tailoring supplies and food according to final numbers
- > Encourage delegates to separate waste
- > Reduce use of gift bags or satchels
- > Create incentives for suppliers to return excess or unused products
- > Educate delegates about how they can assist to reduce waste

## Activities to encourage being 'green'

- > Plan to include sessions on relevant environmental issues
- > Offer off-site activities that are nature based with minimal environmental impact
- > Suggest a community activity for delegates which helps restore the environment
- > Give an eco-friendly award to the greenest exhibitor

## This checklist was collated from the following sources:

- > BlueGreen Meetings website - has a wide range of tips on reducing the environmental impact of business events: [BlueGreenMeetings.org](http://BlueGreenMeetings.org)
- > Green Event Ideas, Ecowise November 2007 – Ecowise is a publication produced by the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre's environmental program. The centre is Green Globe Benchmarked
- > Start a Green Event Policy – a checklist to running an environmentally sustainable event on a sustainable budget from a presentation @ RSVP, Sydney, July 2007, by Clare Donovan of the Australian Conservation Foundation; Jeremy Garling of Great Southern E-vents and Larissa Moore of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change.

## Useful links

**Business Events Australia**  
[businessevents.australia.com](http://businessevents.australia.com)

**BlueGreen Meetings**  
[BlueGreenMeetings.org](http://BlueGreenMeetings.org)

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