

# Australian Alps National Parks | Green guidelines for events

This guide outlines the key steps in planning and conducting an environmentally aware event and provides a checklist that can be used as a planning tool.

The key to planning a successful environmentally aware meeting or event is to set environmental priorities early in event planning and incorporate them into as many facets of the event as possible.

## 1. Set your environmental priorities

Identify environmental issues that are especially significant to the organization and region as well as those which relate to the event. Clearly defined environmental priorities will help you identify the specific actions you can take to meet these objectives. Examples of some priorities are:

- **Preventing or reducing waste** - the best way is not to create it in the first place
- **Minimizing or off-setting harmful emissions** resulting from transport and energy consumption
- Reducing energy and water consumption
- **Recycling and managing waste** - waste prevention measures and recycling collection will significantly reduce the amount of waste generated
- **Other environmental issues.** Other issues important to the event might include water conservation, habitat conservation or animal conservation.

## 2: Translate your priorities into actions

**Use paperless technology.** Use new media and electronic technology to cut down your paper use. Create a conference web site; offer electronic registration and confirmation; and advertise using the web and/or email.

### Communications and marketing

- Prepare an environmental policy for the meeting, and share it with all those involved: management, suppliers, delegates, presenters, and exhibitors.
- Use your website and emailing lists to promote the event.
- Offer electronic registration, and publish the conference itinerary on-line.
- For material that needs to be available in hard copy, print using both sides of the paper, using soy or vegetable-based inks and recycled, chlorine-free paper.
- Give delegates their packages when they check in - not beforehand - to avoid duplication.
- Allow delegates to request electronic proceedings of the events.
- Ask presenters to minimize paper hand-outs.
- Post speakers' notes electronically along with conference proceedings.

**Travel.** Reduce distances travelled by speakers and delegates. Choose a location that's close to as many delegates as possible.

- Have those who can't attend travel virtually, by using technology such as telephone, satellite or web conferencing.
- Alert delegates to environmentally preferable transportation choices for getting to their destination.
- If air travel is required, recommend an airline with a sound environmental program.
- Make it easy for delegates to get between the airport and the hotel/ meeting venue. Provide information about the local public transit system, or arrange for carpooling shuttles.
- If vehicular transport is required, look for vehicles that reduce emissions of greenhouse gases such as CO<sub>2</sub>. Electric and hybrid powered vehicles, as well as vehicles propelled by natural gas, propane, methane gas, and ethanol, produce less emissions than gas or diesel fuelled vehicles.
- Provide a public transit pass and map in delegates' packages.
- Consider establishing a Carbon-Neutral initiative to counteract the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from your event.

**Venue hire.** Ask your hotel and meeting venue to provide visible and accessible reduction

- Ensure venues have reuse and recycling services for paper, metal, plastic and glass.
- Use accommodation which requires no vehicular transport to meeting venue and food venue
- Choose a hotel that offers a linen reuse program and bulk dispensers for shampoos and soaps in guest suites.

**Catering.** Eat green by including vegetarian meals, and have meals planned using local, seasonal produce.

Also:

- Ask that condiments, beverages, and other food items be provided in bulk instead of individually packaged.
- Ensure food and beverage packaging is recyclable, and that it will be recycled.
- Give your delegates reusable coffee mugs at the start of the conference
- Ask your supplier to buy local produce that is in season, to avoid costly transportation of goods.
- Offer fair trade, shade grown, organic coffee.
- Request organic produce, and free run chicken/eggs/meats.
- Offer vegetarian meal selections; vegetables consume less land base and energy to produce.
- Ask delegates to sign-up for and pre-select meals, by letting you know what meals they will be attending. This will reduce food waste – and your costs.
- Arrange to have left over food donated to a local food bank or soup kitchen.
- Ask if unusable left over food portions will be composted.
- Ask your supplier to use reusable cutlery, dishware and linens.

**Preventing or reducing waste.** The best way to deal with waste is not to create it in the first place.

Determine what materials are needed at your event and consider ways to reduce the amount used. For example, conference planners may reduce the amount of paper they distribute by purging duplicate addresses from mailing lists and requiring that all printed materials be double-sided.

**Close the recycling loop.** Have all printed materials published on recycled paper, using vegetable-based inks, and on both sides of the page.

**Save energy.** Coordinate with the meeting venue to ensure that energy lights and air conditioning will be turned off when rooms are not in use.

**Buy green products.** Encourage your planning team and contractors to look for products that:

- Use recycled paper and vegetable (and soy) based inks for promotional materials and handouts.
- Consider selling or providing refillable containers for beverages.
- Provide reusable containers for handouts or samples (pocket or file folders, cloth bags).
- Where reusable items are not feasible, select products that are made from recovered materials and that also can be recycled.
- Buy products which are recyclable or compostable.

## Checklist

### Setting environmental priorities

- What are your main environmental priorities for this event?

### Contracting food service and lodging

- Plan food service needs carefully to avoid unnecessary waste.
- Consider use of durable food service items.
- Donate excess food to charitable organizations.
- Work with hotel on non-replacement of linens, soaps, etc.

### Buying environmentally aware products

- Use recycled paper and vegetable (and soy) based inks for promotional materials and handouts.
- Consider selling or providing refillable containers for beverages.
- Provide reusable containers for handouts or samples (pocket or file folders, cloth bags).
- Where reusable items are not feasible, select products that are made from recovered materials and that also can be recycled.

### Preventing, reducing and managing waste

- Use double-sided printing for promotional materials and handouts.
- Avoid mass distribution of handouts and allow attendees to order copies.
- Provide reusable name badges.
- Provide paper and recyclable beverage containers in meeting areas.

### Conserving energy and reducing traffic

- Seek naturally lighted meeting and exhibit spaces.
- Publicize mass transportation options
- Provide shuttle service from mass transit stops or hotels to the event site.

### Other environmental priorities

- What other priorities have you set – list them to make sure you don't forget them in planning.