

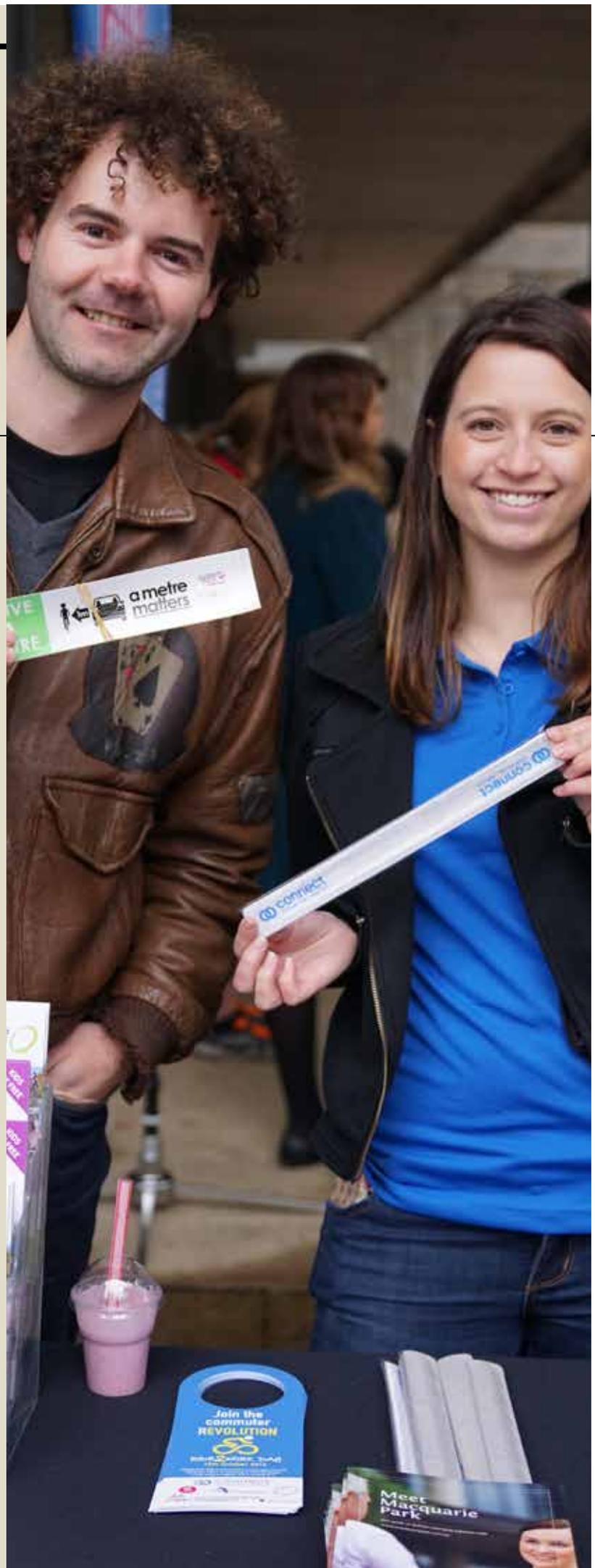
Sustaining our events

A GUIDE TO HOSTING SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



Contents

ENERGY AND EMISSIONS	4
TRANSPORT	5
FOOD	6
WASTE	8
EDUCATION	9
RATING YOUR EVENT	10
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	11
SUSTAINABLE FOOD REQUIREMENTS	12
GETTING TO MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY	13
SUSTAINABLE EVENT SUMMARY FORM	14



The approach

Our University: Framing of Futures clearly states that we are committed to the principles of sustainability (see figure 1). University events can have significant impacts on the environment through the message they send about our culture and society, as well as through environmental impacts such as the generation of waste. As a higher education institute Macquarie University has the opportunity to play a leading role in sustainability by educating the public through its events.

FIGURE 1



WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE EVENT?

A sustainable event is one that commits to the principles of sustainability (see figure 2). To this end, the impact of all aspects of the event must be considered, including: aims and messaging; food services; energy consumption; location and transportation; and waste generation. The goal is to reduce environmental impact, add value to the local economy, engage the university and wider community and educate those involved.

FIGURE 2



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide has been developed as a practical reference tool to enable staff and students to organise more sustainable events on campus. It incorporates a rating tool which will allow your event to be given a gold, silver or bronze rating. To use this guide simply read the sections that are relevant to your event, plan your event using the ideas in this guide and then fill out an online form at mq.edu.au/sustainability to let us know how you went.

Energy and emissions

Macquarie University is one of the top 200 energy users in NSW, producing approximately 37,431 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year¹. Help reduce the University's emissions by holding a carbon neutral event. This is an event that makes no net contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Simply reduce your energy consumption as much as possible and then offset any unavoidable emissions.

REDUCING ENERGY CONSUMPTION

LIGHTING

Hold your event during the day in a location that will provide adequate natural light. If you must use lights make sure they are turned off when not in use.

HEATING/COOLING

Air-conditioning and heating is one of the largest sources of energy consumption on campus. If you are holding your event indoors consider raising or lowering the air-conditioner/heater set point to better suit the environment.

As a rough guide, set the thermostat no lower than 23oC in summer and no more than 18oC in winter.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Electrical equipment left on standby can still use a lot of electricity. Be sure to turn off overhead projectors, microphones, computers, slide projectors and any other electrical equipment when not in use.

OFFSETTING EMISSIONS

In order for your event to be carbon neutral it will be necessary to offset any remaining emissions. Carbon offsetting is where the emissions from your event are neutralised by other activities such as tree planting or energy saving initiatives.

The first step to offsetting emissions is to work out the total emissions your event will produce. Carbon calculators for events can be found online.

Alternatively, many organisations now offer a carbon auditing service where they work out the emissions for you. Once you have worked out the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions your event will produce the next step is to purchase enough carbon offsets to make your event carbon neutral. The majority of providers in Australia are now legitimate as a result of stringent standards, but try to seek out Verified Carbon Standard, Gold Standard, or the Carbon Farming Initiative mark for independently verified schemes.

¹ Macquarie University Annual Sustainability Report 2013, (2014, Macquarie University: Sydney) p.40.

Did you know?

Increasing the temperature of the air-conditioner set point in summer by just 1 degree can reduce energy and emissions by 10 percent as the air conditioner does not have to work as hard.

Leading the Way!

In 2009 Bankstown City Council made their Australia Day celebrations carbon neutral by calculating the emissions produced from transport, food, materials, entertainment and activities and purchasing carbon offsets.



Transport

When an event is held on campus it means a lot of people have to travel to the university. Already, staff and student travel to Macquarie generates approximately 17,029 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year. This is approximately 0.1% of the total greenhouse gas emissions produced from all road transport in NSW²! Help avert climate change and reduce air pollution by promoting the use of alternative forms of transport to your event. Consider the following:

CAR-POOLING

Macquarie Park transport mapping and ride sharing tool. Co-Hop makes it simple to arrange safe, friendly car pooling and ride sharing to and from the Macquarie Park area. Free for Macquarie University staff and students, it helps you find people local to you who can easily fit into your travel times and the way you want to commute. Download the app at connectmacpark.com/cohop

VIRTUAL CONFERENCING

Virtual conferencing can eliminate the need for people to travel to campus, saving time, money and greenhouse gases. It is especially appropriate for participants who live overseas or interstate. There are video conferencing services offered through iLearn: mq.edu.au/iLearn/zoom.htm, in addition to any faculty/department based facilities you may have.

CYCLING AND WALKING

Encourage participants to cycle or walk to campus by providing maps and directions for accessing the campus via cycling and walking routes. Be sure to highlight the location of bike parking, change rooms and showers to make it as easy as possible for participants to take this healthier option.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

With the new train station it is now even easier to get to Macquarie University. Encourage participants to take public transport by providing directions on how to access the campus via bus or train. Event participants can work out public transport times using the Public Transport Infoline. Simply visit: transportnsw.info

OFFSET EMISSIONS

If event participants are flying in from overseas or interstate or driving to the university encourage them to offset their emissions. This can be done quickly and easily through a carbon offset provider - see previous "Offsetting Emissions" section in Energy and Emissions for more details.

² GTA Consultants, Macquarie University Sustainable Transport Plan 2008

Did you know?

It is surprisingly cheap to offset emissions from flights. The following prices refer to a return flight for one person:
Adelaide - Sydney = \$12.80 Brisbane - Sydney = \$9.20
Canberra - Sydney = \$4.80 Darwin - Sydney = \$29.80
Hobart - Sydney = \$11.80 Melbourne - Sydney = \$9.00
Perth - Sydney = \$31.00 Source: Carbon Neutral as at July 2009

Tip!

Event participants can find a car pool buddy or a 'bike buddy' to ride to the university with using Co-Hop. Download the app at connectmacpark.com/cohop



Food

It is easy to forget about the resources used to produce everyday foods. However, the food you serve at an event can make a big difference to the event's overall sustainability. Poor food choices can contribute to land degradation, loss of biodiversity, climate change and the excessive use of agricultural chemicals. By opting for sustainable food choices you can help support local economies and reduce environmental impacts.

PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE CATERING

1. CHOOSE LOCALLY GROWN, SEASONAL PRODUCE

Generally, the further food has to travel to your plate the more greenhouse gas emissions and pollution it produces. A Victorian study found that a typical supermarket shopping basket contains food that has traveled approximately 70,803 km (almost twice around the circumference of the globe), producing approximately 11,327 tonnes of greenhouse gases. This is the equivalent of 2,832 cars driving on the roads for one year³! Make your event more sustainable by purchasing locally grown food. This will not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but will also support local economies.

A good way to ensure food is locally grown is to choose food that is in season. If food is out of season it is more likely to have been imported from overseas or stored for extended periods using fungicides and other chemicals to prolong shelf life. Local seasonal fruit and vegetable guides are available online.

2. CHOOSE ORGANIC PRODUCE

Conventional agriculture has been associated with loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, salinity, desertification, water pollution, climate change and the excessive use of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals⁴. Choose organic products to help conserve soils, enhance biodiversity, reduce pollution and minimise chemical inputs.

3. REDUCE ANIMAL PRODUCTS (MEAT, DAIRY AND EGGS)

Livestock production is one of the largest sources of human induced greenhouse gas emissions in the world, producing more than 18 percent of global emissions. This is more than the world's entire transport sector⁵! Livestock production is also one of the world's leading causes of land degradation and loss of biodiversity⁶. According to a CSIRO study a huge 92 percent of all land degradation in Australia is caused by animal industries⁷. Choose vegetarian and vegan foods to greatly reduce your environmental impact.

4. CHOOSE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

Modern fishing practices have led to degradation of marine habitats and overexploitation of marine resources. Many fish species have been fished to the brink of extinction while millions of sea turtles, marine mammals, sharks and sea birds continue to be caught and discarded as by-catch each year.

If you are going to serve seafood make sure it has been harvested using sustainable methods that do not harm the environment or contribute to overfishing. A list of sustainable seafood choices can be obtained from Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide: sustainableseafood.org.au

Look for Marine Stewardship Council certified seafood.

5. PROMOTE FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS

Fair trade aims to secure fair working and trading conditions for people in developing countries. Macquarie University became the first joint fair trade accredited university in Australia and New Zealand in May, 2009. You can help support this movement by using fair trade and ethically sourced products, such as tea, coffee, merchandise (eg. t-shirts made from fair trade cotton), and chocolate at your events.

6. PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The global food system is dysfunctional both from a health and sustainability perspective. The good news is that what we eat determines our health, and that also determines the health of our planet. By following the principles above and ensuring that the food served is healthy and nutritious we can make significant gains in public health.



Did you know?

In addition to being better for the environment organic production is also better for animal welfare. Certified organic products must be produced under free range conditions and animals are not allowed to undergo many of the painful procedures used in conventional agriculture, such as tail docking and beak trimming.

Did you know?

It takes up to 50 000 litres of water to produce just one kilogram of beef. This is compared to 2 500 litres of water for a kilogram of rice and much less for most fruit and vegetables.

Source: Vegetarian Network of Victoria, *Eating up the World: The Environmental Consequences of Human Food Choices* (2009) 4.

Did you know?

Eighty percent of the world's fish stocks are considered fully exploited, overexploited, depleted or recovering from depletion.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2008* (2009, Rome) 30.

³ Sophie Gaballa and Asha Bee Abraham, *Food Miles in Australia: A Preliminary Study of Melbourne, Victoria* (2008, CERES) 23-4.

⁴ Leo Horrigan, Robert S Lawrence and Polly Walker, 'How Sustainable Agriculture Can Address the Environmental and Human Health Harms of Industrial Agriculture' (2002) 110(5) *Environmental Health Perspectives* 445.

⁵ Henning Steinfeld, Pierre Gerber, Tom Wassenaar, Vincent Castel, Mauricio Rasales, Cees de Haan, *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2006, Rome) 112, 272.

⁶ Henning Steinfeld, Pierre Gerber, Tom Wassenaar, Vincent Castel, Mauricio Rasales, Cees de Haan, *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2006, Rome) 267.

⁷ Vegetarian Network of Victoria, *Eating up the World: The Environmental Consequences of Human Food Choices* (2009) 9.

Waste

Macquarie University has a one bin waste management system has resulted in less than 25% of waste ending up as landfill. All rubbish generated on campus is taken to the Doyle Brothers' Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) which successfully recovers recyclable/reusable materials including plastic, paper and cardboard, organics and metals. Please ensure Property is aware of your event so extra bins can be arranged if necessary. Contact Property via the online Service Request form: ofm.mq.edu.au/service_request.html

Always remember to rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle. Try and incorporate some of the following suggestions into your event planning:

GO PAPERLESS

Use websites, email lists and other electronic resources to promote your event and have attendees register online. Avoid distributing handouts by allowing presenters to disseminate information in an online format.

MAKE SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING CHOICES

If you must purchase items for your event make sure they are recycled or recyclable, minimally packaged, locally and ethically produced and environmentally friendly.

CALCULATE NUMBERS

Carefully calculate the amount of equipment you will need and how many people to cater for to avoid unnecessary waste. If you do have left over food (with a low contamination risk) consider giving it to event participants to take home, sharing it with others at the university or donating it to a local food kitchen.

GO SINGLE-USE PLASTIC FREE

Reduce waste by using tap water instead of bottled water and using non-disposable cups, plates, bowls and cutlery instead of disposable ones. If you must have single use items, options such as paper, cardboard, bamboo, and sugar cane are compostable. PLA (polylactic acid) and corn starch

'bio-plastics' are commercially compostable only (i.e. they need to be heat treated and will not break down in home-style compost systems). For beverage containers, consider providing Container Deposit Scheme acceptable containers only so that they can be recycled for a 10c rebate per container.

REUSE ITEMS

Keep any unused items from the event and reuse them at a later date. For example, for reoccurring or annual events avoid printing dates and slogans on signs, posters, and banners so they can be reused. Additionally, collect items such as plastic name tag holders to reuse at another event.

USE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY CLEANING PRODUCTS

Use non-toxic, environmentally friendly cleaning products to clean up after your event. Such products can be purchased cheaply in most stores or you can make your own using everyday household ingredients.

USE SUSTAINABLE GIFTS

If you are going to be providing prizes or gifts to event participants consider using sustainable items such as organic seed packets, potted herbs, organic wine, fair trade chocolate, carbon offset gift certificates, gifts supporting social causes or 'experience gifts' such as massages.

We Can Do Better

In 2008 a waste audit of Macquarie University found the following food items were thrown out in a single 24 hour period:

21 x pre-packaged sandwiches	3 x pre-packaged baguettes
A minimum of 100 bread rolls	5 x full and 2 x ½ wraps
4 x 125gram sushi rolls	3 x vegetable rolls
9 x pies of assorted varieties	7 x pre-packaged muffins
5 x loaves of bread	2 x takeaway meals (full containers)
1 x tray of fruit	1 x tray of sweets

Source: Waste Audit and Consultancy Services, Waste Audit Report: Macquarie University (2008) 28.





Education

Education is the key to lasting changes in peoples' behaviour. Consider using your event as an opportunity to educate participants about sustainability and the initiatives you have used to reduce the event's environmental impact.

BEFORE THE EVENT

PROMOTE YOUR EVENT AS A GREEN EVENT

Note that your event is going to be a sustainable event on any advertising or promotional materials produced for the event. For example, send out electronic invitations and note that you have not sent printed invitations in order to reduce waste. Show your commitment to sustainability in your communications with potential sponsors, presenters, participants, contractors, suppliers and the media.

INFORM PARTICIPANTS OF THE GOALS OF THE EVENT

Inform participants that you will be aiming to have a sustainable event and ask participants for assistance in meeting your sustainability goals. For example, you might inform participants that it will be a "BYOC" (Bring Your Own Cup) event, to reduce the need for disposable cups.

DURING THE EVENT

EDUCATE PARTICIPANTS

Let participants know of the extra steps you have taken to make the event more sustainable such as buying locally-produced food, composting waste, carbon-offsetting the event or using non-toxic cleaning supplies. Ask participants to comply with any measures put in place to reduce environmental impact.

GENERATE DATA

Where possible, collect data to determine the success of sustainability strategies. For example, ask participants to complete an online survey of how they traveled to the event to determine whether your push for alternative forms of transport was successful.

AFTER THE EVENT

REPORT ON THE SUCCESS OF THE EVENT

Calculate and report results of the event on the event's website or by emailing participants. Consider writing an article on the sustainability aspects of your event for a university publication, such as This Week.

PROVIDE INFORMATION, ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE

Now that you are an expert on organising sustainable events consider offering advice and assistance to other university staff, students or departments wishing to organise a more sustainable event.

RATING YOUR EVENT

Listed overleaf are a number of action items you can incorporate into your event. Depending on the number of items you incorporate you can obtain a gold, silver or bronze rating for your event⁸.

⁸ This rating system was adapted from Yale University's Sustainable Event Guidelines (2009)

RATING	REQUIREMENT
Gold	14 or more action items
Silver	10 or more action items
Bronze	8 or more action items

Rating your event

ACTION ITEMS	
ENERGY AND EMISSIONS	COMPLETED
My event was held during the day using natural lighting.	
Electrical equipment at my event was turned off when not needed.	
Air-conditioners/heaters were adjusted to suit the climate.	
The emissions produced by my event were carbon-offset.	
TRANSPORT	
Event participants were given information about walking, cycling, catching public transport and car-pooling to the university.	
Event participants were given information about carbon-offsetting the emissions produced from flying or driving to the university.	
My event used virtual conferencing facilities.	
FOOD	
I requested a sustainable menu.	
I created a sustainable menu using the principles of sustainable catering found in this guide.	
WASTE	
My event used electronic forms of advertising to reduce paper.	
Material use at my event was reduced by carefully calculating numbers.	
Leftover food at my event was given to participants to take home, shared with others at the University or stored safely to share with colleagues the following day.	
Reusable items at my event were collected for later use.	
My event used tap water instead of bottled water.	
Materials bought for my event were locally produced and environmentally friendly.	
Green cleaning products were used to clean up after my event.	
EDUCATION	
Participants were informed that sustainability was one of the aims of the event and were asked to assist in meeting this aim.	
Participants were informed of the extra steps taken to make the event more sustainable.	
The event was promoted as a sustainable event.	
Data was collected to determine the effectiveness of one of the events sustainability initiatives.	
The sustainable aspects of the event were highlighted in an article or on a website after the conclusion of the event.	



Additional resources

ENERGY AND EMISSIONS

Carbon Neutral - www.carbonneutral.com.au
Carbon Planet - www.carbonplanet.com
Climate Friendly - www.climatefriendly.com
Greenfleet - www.greenfleet.com.au
Energy Smart - www.energysmart.com.au
GreenPower - www.greenpower.gov.au
NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change
- www.environment.nsw.gov.au

TRANSPORT

Bicycle NSW - www.bicyclensw.org.au
Carpool Australia - www.carpoolaustralia.com
CarpoolWorld - www.carpoolworld.com
CoHop - www.connectmacpark.com/cohop
Connect Macquarie Park - www.connectmacpark.com
Macquarie University Bike User Group
- www.macquariebike.wordpress.com
Macquarie University Transport - www.mq.edu.au/transport
Public Transport Infoline - www.131500.com.au

FOOD

Australian Organic Food Directory - www.organicfooddirectory.com.au
Australian Vegetarian Society - www.veg-soc.org
Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide - www.sustainableseafood.org.au
Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand - www.fta.org.au
Organic Directory Australia - www.enviro.org.au/Organics-directory-australia.asp
Organic Food Express - www.organicfoodexpress.com.au

WASTE

Freecycle - www.freecycle.org
Planet Ark - www.planetark.com
Reverse Garbage NSW - www.reversegarbage.org.au
Total Environment Centre - Green Cleaning - www.safersolutions.org.au

EDUCATION

Department of Environment and Energy - www.environment.gov.au
Global Footprint Network - www.footprintnetwork.org
NSW Department of Environment and Energy and Science - www.environment.nsw.gov.au
Macquarie University Sustainability Induction Module - <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/course/view.php?id=14362>

Sustainable food requirements

NOTE FOR CATERERS

Macquarie University is trying to make sustainable food choices for all of its meetings and events. Please help us by following the seven principles of sustainable catering when you are catering our event.

CHOOSE LOCALLY GROWN, SEASONAL PRODUCE

We would prefer locally grown, seasonal produce to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. A seasonal fruit and vegetable chart is available at: www.vnv.org.au/site/files/seasonalfoodcalendar.pdf

CHOOSE FOOD PRODUCED BY ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTION METHODS

We would prefer organic food, where possible, to minimise chemical inputs and to help reduce our impact on the environment.

MINIMISE THE USE OF ANIMAL PRODUCTS (MEAT, DAIRY AND EGGS)

We would like a high proportion of vegetarian and vegan foods as these have less impact on the environment. Please tell us about the different vegetarian and vegan options you have available.

Where animal products are to be used we prefer organic varieties as these are better for the environment and have the highest animal welfare standards.

CHOOSE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

If seafood is to be served we prefer the use of varieties that are not overfished and are caught using methods that do not harm the environment. Please follow Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide, available from the Marine Conservation Society: sustainableseafood.org.au

MINIMISE WASTE

We would like to reduce waste by drinking tap water instead of bottled water. We would also prefer to use re-usable cutlery, crockery and glass ware. If disposable items must be used please ensure they are biodegradable.

PROMOTE FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS

We would prefer that all tea and coffee served is Fairtrade certified. This ensures that farmers in developing countries receive a fair price for their goods. For suppliers of Fairtrade products visit: fta.org.au

PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

We would prefer healthy food options, containing lots of fresh fruit, vegetables, wholegrain cereals and legumes and minimal quantities of refined sugar and trans fats.





Getting to Macquarie

Please help us reduce the environmental impact of our event by taking alternative forms of transport to the University.

CYCLING AND WALKING

Eliminate greenhouse gas emissions by cycling or walking to Macquarie. Bike parking is found outside buildings E4A, F5A, E7B, E3A and C7A. Secure Bike storage facilities are available in the F5A carpark. Showers are found in buildings F7B, E3A, E4A, E5A, E6A, E8A, E11A, C5C, C10A, X5B and W10A.

More information about cycling to Macquarie can be found at mq.edu.au/transport

In addition, you can find a bike buddy or car pooling match to travel to the University with via connectmacpark.com/cohop

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

You can travel to the University quickly and easily via bus or train. Information on public transport routes can be found at mq.edu.au/transport

You can also access timetable information via: www.131500.com.au

CAR-POOLING

Macquarie University has a carpooling system in place for all staff and students. You can find carpooling partners at: connectmacpark.com/cohop

OFFSETTING EMISSIONS

If you are flying to Sydney from overseas or interstate or driving to the University, consider offsetting your emissions. You can purchase carbon offsets from one of Australia's many carbon offset providers.

Sustainable event summary form

Please use this form to let us know how you were able to reduce the environmental impact of your event. Place an X next to those actions that you were able to incorporate into your event and tell us about any additional initiatives in the space provided below.

SUMMARY OF EVENT
Name of event coordinator(s)
Department
Name of event
Date
Number of people that attended (approx.)

RATING	REQUIREMENT
Gold 	14 or more action items
Silver 	10 or more action items
Bronze 	8 or more action items

ACTION ITEMS	
ENERGY AND EMISSIONS	COMPLETED
My event was held during the day using natural lighting.	
Electrical equipment at my event was turned off when not needed.	
Air-conditioners/heaters were adjusted to suit the climate.	
The emissions produced by my event were carbon-offset.	
TRANSPORT	COMPLETED
Event participants were given information about walking, cycling, catching public transport and car-pooling to the University.	
Event participants were given information about carbon-offsetting the emissions produced from flying or driving to the University.	
My event used virtual conferencing facilities.	

ACTION ITEMS CONTINUED

FOOD	COMPLETED
I requested a sustainable menu.	
I created a sustainable menu using the principles of sustainable catering found in this guide.	
WASTE	COMPLETED
My event used electronic forms of advertising to reduce paper.	
Material use at my event was reduced by carefully calculating numbers.	
Leftover food at my event was given to participants to take home, shared with others at the University or stored safely to share with colleagues the following day.	
Reusable items at my event were collected for later use.	
My event used tap water instead of bottled water.	
Materials bought for my event were locally produced and environmentally friendly.	
Green cleaning products were used to clean up after my event.	
EDUCATION	COMPLETED
Participants were informed that sustainability was one of the aims of the event and were asked to assist in meeting this aim.	
Participants were informed of the extra steps taken to make the event more sustainable.	
The event was promoted as a sustainable event.	
Data was collected to determine the effectiveness of one of the event's sustainability initiatives.	
The sustainable aspects of the event were highlighted in an article or on a website after the conclusion of the event.	

Please tell us about any additional initiatives you implemented to make your event more sustainable.

Please tell us about any areas you had difficulty with or any areas you would like assistance with in the future.

Additional Comments

FIND OUT MORE AT
mq.edu.au/sustainability
sustainability@mq.edu.au



MACQUARIE
University