

Waste for Events

August 2024

This fact sheet is designed as a guide only to provide event operators with relevant information regarding adequate management of waste and litter control while providing opportunities to reduce waste and encourage recycling.

Introduction

While events are proportionally small waste generators, they are big influencers in changing waste management behaviour. This fact sheet provides information to assist event organisers to:

- reduce waste generation and increase resource recovery;
- prevent litter at events to maintain public health;
- improve community awareness of waste management.

To ensure waste is managed effectively, during and after the event and to prevent unsanitary conditions and environmental harm, event organisers shall consider preparation of a waste management plan as part of their event application submitted to Council.

Waste and litter management

Waste management at events involves reducing, re-using and recycling. Events must have suitable and adequate facilities for the storage and collection of solid waste and recyclables that are easily identifiable and accessible by patrons, food vendors and waste collectors.

The following should be considered as part of a litter management plan for your event:

- “no glass” policy;
- containers provided specifically for the disposal of glass, sharp objects, and separate syringe disposal unit/s;
- relocation of bins from low use to high demand areas;
- collection and disposal of litter regularly throughout the event;
- covering of bulk bins to contain waste and prevent scavenging by birds;
- covering of bulk bins to prevent wind-blown litter from covering entrances to stormwater drains (should have gauze/mesh where there is a chance of litter gaining access to drains).

Temporary event bins

Event operators must provide an adequate number of rubbish bins with lids, with regular emptying as often as needed to prevent infestation and overflow. Council recommends the following minimum bin numbers for attendee use (in addition to any existing bin infrastructure):

if no food or drinks served or sold

- 1x 240L general waste bin per 100 attendees.

if food or drinks served or sold

- 2 x 240L general waste bins per 100 attendees; and
- 2 x 240L recycling bins per 100 attendees; and
- 1 x 3m front load skip bin for more than 1,000 attendees.

Council can provide general waste and co-mingled recycling bins for events including 240L wheeled bins for easy placement. Rates for these services are provided in our [Register of Fees and Charges](#). Private waste providers also offer a range of event related waste services that may suit your needs.

Eligible not-for-profit groups and organisations may be able to access free bins as in-kind support from Council, contact us on 07 5540 5111 for more information.

Bin replacement

How people move around and use a site determines the optimal placement of bins (the distance people are prepared to walk to throw waste in a bin is considered to be six metres).

Bins should be placed:

- in accessible points close to where patrons pass by;
- where people enter and exit;
- for the convenience of the user, rather than the collector;
- where they can be effectively emptied and serviced, especially in peak periods;
- where patrons may gather to view displays, rides etc;
- away from services and building structures such as fire exits, walls and congested pedestrian areas;
- where items are likely to be thrown away, not where they are bought, such as near entrances and exits, within eating areas, near toilets, walkways and car parks.

Recycling

Caterers and food vendors can recycle and reduce packaging at events by:

- re-using items where possible, such as non-disposable cutlery and crockery;
- segregating recyclables, such as bottles, cans, cartons, organics, rubbish, paper and cardboard, corks and food oil (cardboard boxes should be flattened);
- informing staff and suppliers on the importance of minimising waste, including packaging of food and quantities of serviettes;
- providing food and drinks in recyclable containers, such as non-plasticised paper

plates and cups, glass, cans and PET plastic bottles and using recyclable packaging such as cardboard boxes (polystyrene and waxed cardboard are not recyclable).

Where food and beverages are supplied in recyclable packaging, recycle bins should be provided for patron use especially near food areas. Recycle bins should be placed side-by-side with waste bins not back-to-back.

Waste and recyclable materials from stalls should be separated and contained “back of house” and not placed in bins at recycling stations.

Water stations

To reduce single use beverage containers at your event, water stations can be purchased or hired. These water stations generally need to be connected to a nearby drinking water source using a water hose and are designed to provide filtered water.

Waste water requirements

No waste water is to be released onsite. All waste water is to be removed from the site and disposed of in an approved manner. This includes waste water from stall holders, food vans, caravans, or campers.

Containers for change

A range of beverage containers are eligible for a 10 cent refund through Containers for Change. For small events a small bin, box or container can be used for collection and all eligible bottles and cans can be taken to the nearest refund point. For larger events Containers for Change bins are available for delivery and collection. Contact the local operator for further information. Details of local operators can be found at [Container Exchange](#).

Before the event

- Waste is everybody’s responsibility, consider who you can work with to reduce waste, including food vendors, contractors and other suppliers. This fact sheet can be used as a conversation starter.
- Think about the type of waste your event will generate and how to avoid waste in the first

place through the infrastructure, consumables and food and beverages provided. If you can't avoid it, are there recyclables alternatives available? Refer below for some single use swaps and some ideas to reduce waste at your next event.

- If your event occurs regularly, consider setting a goal for what you would like to improve, for example, no bottled water, collect food waste for composting, no single use merchandise offered.
- Think about how you share information on your waste reduction efforts, this may be as part of:
 - event promotion;
 - volunteer, staff or vendor briefings;
 - signage at the event.
- For larger events, document a waste management plan considering front and back of house waste management, including opportunities for waste segregation such as cardboard, organics and specific plastics and signage options for both staff and attendees.

During the event

Waste must be collected and disposed of in a manner which maintains the area in a clean, tidy, sanitary and hygienic condition. You should:

- clearly label recycling and waste bins and keep them in pairs. Check that recycling bins are being used;
- arrange public announcements on waste and recycling facilities;
- monitor and empty waste bins at regular intervals into bulk bins to prevent overflowing litter;
- use bin liners in all waste bins;
- engage trained personnel to monitor the event for site litter and bin management;
- monitor waste and recycling bins for minimal or high use, and provide additional bins if necessary;
- advise stallholders of waste management requirements;
- ensure food scraps or offensive waste are disposed of in lidded bins;
- monitor food vendors and stall holders – make sure they are doing what you have agreed to and are avoiding unnecessary waste.

After the event

Waste can be controlled after the event by:

- completing site clean-up of all litter and disposing into appropriate bins;
- placing waste containers in agreed location for collection (waste bins and recycle bins should be grouped separately to allow access by contractors);
- closing lids on any bulk bins.

Evaluate your efforts:

- *did steps to 'avoid' waste work?*
- *did you generate unexpected waste?*
- *are there additional alternatives you could use in future to avoid waste typically destined for landfill?*




More information

For further information, contact Council on 07 5540 5111 or alternatively mail@scenicrim.qld.gov.au.

See also, Events in Queensland, Best practice guidelines for event delivery in Queensland [Events in Queensland](#)

Single use swaps

Here are some ideas to reduce event waste, the first choice is always to avoid waste, followed by reducing and recycling.

ITEM	BEST	BETTER	GOOD	NOT GOOD
Cups, bottles and beverages	BYO or provide reusable cups/bottles and provide dispensed beverages No straws	Beverages in 10c refund eligible containers and collection of containers No straws	All beverages in recyclable or compostable containers Compostable straws	Beverage containers that are not recyclable or compostable  Banned - expanded polystyrene cups, plastic straws
Crockery, cutlery and serving ware	Limit needs by preferencing finger foods	BYO or provide reuseable options	Compostable	 Banned - single use plastic plates, bowls, cutlery and expanded polystyrene takeaway food, containers
Condiments	Reuseable containers and dispensers	Large recyclable containers and dispensers	Small compostable dispensers	Single use plastic sachets or tubs
Flyers	Digital flyers and QR code stands	Flyers made recyclable material and from 100% recycled content	Flyers made on recyclable material with some recycled content	Non-recyclable materials and virgin paper
Bags	No bags provided (BYO)	Natural fibre reuseable bags	Recyclable paper bags	 Banned - single use plastic bags
Promotional materials and giveaways	No giveaways	Locally made consumables with limited packaging	Hardy, reuseable items	Single use or poor quality plastic items