

GREEN MUSIC AUSTRALIA'S

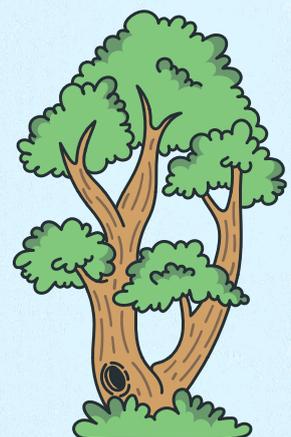
Green Venue Guide



Simple steps and case studies to help improve the environmental performance of Australia's live music venues

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Introduction

Across the world, music venues are realising they have a role to play in tackling climate change and creating a greener future. As powerful cultural hubs, venues have immense potential to lead by example and influence those around them.

We all use electricity for lights and gas for heating or cooking, and no doubt you use materials and create waste from your everyday operations. It's all part of putting on shows, creating great experiences for audiences, and running a successful business. But every decision we make shapes the future we're creating.

Our electricity can come from dirty fossil fuels or clean, renewable sources. The materials we use can lead to the destruction of forests and ecosystems, or help to create circular economies where resources are reused and repurposed. And we can either choose to stay silent—or use our platform to inspire those around us—from suppliers and visiting artists to audiences and customers.

We're so glad you're keen to green your venue. Use this guide as a toolkit to get started, and *reach out to us for support along the way.*

We're Here To Support You

This guide has been produced by Green Music Australia. It's one example of the many ways we support venues and the broader music industry to improve their environmental performance – from events, energy use, tours and transport, to merchandise, packaging and waste. By leading by example and engaging audiences, we believe the music sector can drive deep cultural change.

Greening the music industry is a collective effort. Every venue, artist, record label, and tour must work to reduce emissions, waste, and water use. At the same time, we must push for political change—demanding a renewable electricity grid to power our shows, sustainable public transport for artists and fans, and much more. The only way this can happen is by working together.

Let us support you. We run educational programs like our practical business sustainability course, the *Green Action Program*, and can help you gather and use data to reduce your impact via our powerful carbon management system, *Amidesi*. Once you've taken action, we can help you get your venue recognised for its sustainability through our *Green Venue Certification* scheme.

If you get stuck or need support, we can connect you with the right suppliers to help your business. Whether it's an energy audit, quotes on reusable systems, or advice on waste disposal, we are here to answer your questions. Plus you can sign up to our *music industry newsletter* to stay up to date on advancements, funding opportunities, and educational resources to support your journey.





Angie McMahon, Gretta Ray, Green Music Australia CEO Berish Bilander and Corner Group Operations Manager Georgie Martin at the Corner Hotel for the No Music on a Dead Planet campaign, 2022 Photo: rcstills

First Nations First

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have cared for this Country for over 65,000 years. Their custodianship has lasted from the time of megafauna, through an ice age, and continues despite the violence of colonisation.

This ancient culture has adapted to unimaginable change by seeing humans as part of the land. First Nations wisdoms hold the answers to living sustainably on Country. This is why First Nations peoples, voices, ideas and practices need to be at the forefront.

While we can't cover everything in a guide like this, it's up to each of us to take the time and care to truly connect with First Nations people, build deeper relationships, and make a difference, both individually and with our communities. Below, we offer starting points, advice, and suggested paths to explore.

CONNECT WITH COUNTRY

Wherever we stand on this vast continent, we're standing on Indigenous land.

We all have a responsibility to know what Country we're on and to acknowledge it publicly – this could be in email signatures, letters (Australia Post lets you **include Traditional Place names** on mail), websites, and at events.

One of the most powerful ways to engage with First Nations practices is to think about where you fit in the picture. Learning about your own cultural heritage and thinking about your relationship to the land can be a meaningful place to start.

ACKNOWLEDGE COUNTRY

If you live in Australia, you will have heard an Acknowledgement of Country. It's a way of showing respect by noting the ongoing connection, resilience and strength of traditional custodians.

A step we can all take is to share an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of shows, on our websites, and on our buildings. For many people, this process can feel a bit nerve wrecking not knowing where to start, **so here are some pointers:**

- Check out **this map** to see whose land you're on.
- Use our suggested wording below to write up an 'in-house acknowledgement of Country' for your venue. That way you, your staff and any visiting performers feel confident delivering one publicly!
- Practice saying it beforehand to make sure you get the names right (This is about respect after all).

Some suggested wording:

I acknowledge the unceded Sovereign Traditional land that this event takes place on. I pay my respects to the (insert people) people of the (insert nation) Nation, to the Custodians of the old ways, to today's leaders and the knowledge holders of tomorrow. Thank you for having us on Country.

Extra Tip:

Make it personal! Include a sentence at the end sharing something you notice or love about the Country you are on - when you share your experience, you can't get it wrong.

It's worth noting that we don't mention 'emerging elders' here. That's because elders don't 'emerge'. Being an elder is an inherited birthright for which ceremony and obligation guide you until the time is right for custodial passage.

RAISE FIRST NATIONS WORK AND VOICES

Going green is not just about 'nature' or 'the environment' - it's also about how we see the world and who has power, a voice and influence. For those with a platform, one of the most powerful things we can do is to advocate for First Nations musicians, sharing work, offering headline billing, stage time and support slots. We've got a brilliant [playlist of First Nations music](#). Use it to find your new favourite artist or information source to amplify.

LISTEN AND LEARN

This is ongoing work. Ultimately, each of us must take the time and care to learn and act, both individually and with our communities. Spend time understanding the history, consider cultural competency training for yourself and your team, and work to create culturally safe and positive spaces for all. As you move forward, remember that a willingness to listen and learn is one of the most powerful tools you can carry on this journey.

FIRST NATIONS FIRST CHECKLIST

At the end of each chapter, we will create a quick action summary for you to refer back to. Use this checklist to track what you're already doing and plan next steps.

Category	Action	Check
Acknowledge Country	Display signage acknowledging the Country your venue is on and ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are visibly present.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Provide information to visiting bands and event hosts about what Country they are on and encourage them to do an Acknowledgement at their show.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Create and display an 'in-house Acknowledgement of Country' to help staff and performers deliver it with confidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Category	Action	Check
Build authentic relationships with local Indigenous folks	Introduce yourself to a local Elder who performs Welcome to Country and build a relationship with them.	<input type="radio"/>
	Invite First Nations collaboration into your venue—such as commissioning a local Indigenous artist to create an Acknowledgement sign or offering shadowing programs for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to gain industry experience.	<input type="radio"/>
Use your platform to amplify First Nations	Play more First Nations music on the sound system in your venue.	<input type="radio"/>
	Use your social media and communication platforms to raise First Nations voices, educate your audiences and advocate for important First Nations issues.	<input type="radio"/>
	Make proactive efforts to give stage time to First Nations artists.	<input type="radio"/>
	Include traditional place names in postage on your official address and on outgoing mail.	<input type="radio"/>
	Contribute to Aboriginal charities like SEED (youth-led Indigenous climate activist network). If in Victoria, you might also consider donating to Pay The Rent.	<input type="radio"/>



Energy

You need the lights on, the fridges cold and a working PA. We get it. But that shouldn't stop you going green. Let's work on reducing your energy consumption first, before cleaning up the rest.

1. REDUCE YOUR ENERGY

We often use energy when it's not necessary—maybe lights or equipment are left on, or leaky doors and windows are wasting your precious air-conditioning. Reading your electricity bill can be revealing, and it's a great first step before making the small changes that will reduce your impact and save you money.

Here's some key things to look out for:

- Draught proof your windows and doors. For a small investment, you'll be surprised how much difference it makes.
- Check fridge seals—old seals can be a surprising source of wasted electricity.
- Turn off lights when spaces are not in use, and use timers or sensors to automate the process if possible.
- Turn off printers, speakers, and other devices when not in use, using timers where possible.
- Talk to your team to agree how to use air-conditioners and lights, and ask them what other opportunities they can see.
- Use blinds and windows to control heat and light.
- Choose energy efficient equipment.
- Check your thermostat temperature and make sure you're not overheating or overcooling your venue.
- Replace older light bulbs with LEDs. They're far more efficient.
- Switch your computer's energy-saving settings on and shut down at the end of day.
- Set up staff procedures to ensure equipment is turned on and off at the end of day.
- You might also like to book some free energy advice through the Federal Government program, **BEAP**.

By taking these steps, you'll join a growing number of buildings across Australia working to improve energy consumption.

CASE STUDY: Energy Audit

We recently worked with the Corner Hotel in Melbourne who after undertaking a comprehensive (Type 1) energy audit, discovered that by doing a few minor retrofits, changing seals on fridges, influencing staff behaviour and replacing their light bulbs with efficient LEDs, they would take less than a year to recoup set up costs and **save more than \$22,000** on their energy and gas bills every year after that. That's HUGE!

Talk to Green Music Australia to find out who we recommend for energy audits across the country.

2. CLEAN UP YOUR ENERGY SOURCE

After reducing your energy consumption, the next thing to do is compare your energy providers, and switch to a greener source.

ENERGY PROVIDERS

Regardless of how much you reduce your energy use and fill your roof with solar, you'll likely still need to purchase some electricity from the grid.

There are two important steps to ensure you're not paying too much and are choosing the greenest option available.

First, compare your provider with what's out there in the market. If your site uses less than 100MWh of energy per year, *Energy Made Easy*, is a simple tool to help. Just upload a recent bill, and the site will estimate how much you'd be charged by other providers.

For sites using more than 100MWh annually, you'll need an energy specialist to research and negotiate on your behalf. Get in touch with us for a list of recommended suppliers.

There are tons of electricity retailers out there, but some are better than others. Thankfully it's easy to switch from fossil fuels to greener suppliers—just choose one near the top of the *Green Electricity Guide rankings*.

And no matter which retailer you choose, request 100% Greenpower™. This encourages providers to move away from coal and gas, investing more in solar and wind energy, and ultimately putting cleaner power into the grid for everyone.

SOLAR

How much space is on your roof? Solar is a great option to generate clean energy using the sun—reducing both your emissions and energy costs at the same time. If you don't use much energy during the day, it might be worth considering a battery to help store power for peak periods in the evening.

To get started, *Solar Quotes* is a free service which suggests vetted solar installers in your area. Alternatively, reach out to a *Clean Energy Council Approved Seller* to see what your options are. It's also important to keep your panels working efficiently. Did you know dirty panels can lose up to 20% of their energy output? We recommend cleaning them at least once a year (or check with your provider for their recommendations).

CASE STUDY: Club 77 Reduce Electricity Rates

In 2024, Sydney/Eora-based venue Club 77 participated in the NSW Green Action Program to educate staff on sustainability and improve its environmental performance. As part of the program, we organised a live onsite energy audit to help the venue identify opportunities for reducing energy usage.

It turned out that Club 77 was paying a higher premium for their electricity than necessary. After comparing rates on Energy Made Easy, they switched to a greener and more affordable provider, **saving an estimated \$3,800 annually.**



Green Action Program participants learning about energy efficiency at Club 77 Photo: Bones Collective

GET OFF GAS

Australia needs to get off natural gas if it is to have any hope of reducing its carbon emissions. Switch cooktops to electric, hot water to heat pumps, and remove those old inefficient gas heaters as soon as you can.

POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENTS

If your business owns multiple sites, consider consolidating your electricity providers to shop around for better deals and green power options. You can do this yourself, or there are businesses we recommend who can handle the work for you.

Don't have multiple sites? The same concept applies if a group of businesses (like music venues in the same region) come together and shop as a collective. There's some great information here on the [City of Sydney's website](#).

CASE STUDY: Arts Energy Procurement, UK

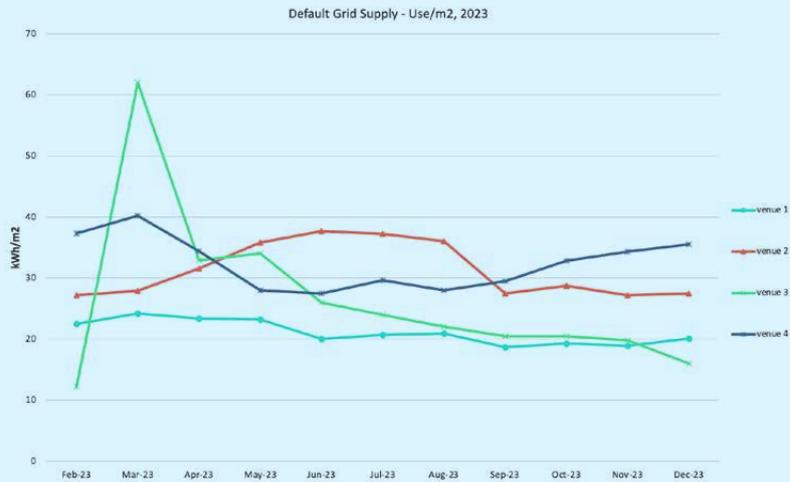
The Arts Basket is a dedicated energy procurement and compliance service for Britain's theatres and arts venues. Originally set up in 2012, by the Royal Opera House, Royal National Theatre, and Royal Albert Hall, the growing consortium of theatres and arts venues uses its collective buying power to access green, renewable energy deals at the lowest possible cost. Almost twenty of Britain's most popular arts venues are now benefiting from cheaper, greener electricity.

In January 2020, the Arts Basket contact offered a regional arts centre electricity for £110,000 per annum, a **£10,000 per annum saving** (almost \$20,000 AUD) compared to their own energy broker.

For more information, check out [Beond Group's website](#).

MEASURE, COMPARE, AND OFFSET

Did you know Green Music Australia can measure your emissions and energy use using your bills? Our custom **Amidesi** platform—powered by iSystain—allows us to create reports that offer comparisons to similar sized venues across Australia.



Excerpt from anonymous venues report, published by Green Music Australia

Amidesi can deliver anonymised venue benchmarking reports that compare your energy consumption and cost against similar venues to your own.

After you measure your energy use, you may want to offset its effects. **‘Carbon offsetting’** compensates for your climate impact—it doesn’t reduce it directly, but helps support efforts to reduce emissions elsewhere on your behalf.

The traditional way to offset your emissions is by purchasing carbon credits from a supplier. In return, your money supports initiatives like planting trees or building renewable energy infrastructure. This is how companies can claim to be carbon neutral—or even carbon negative.

Green Music Australia’s research shows that a “good” Australian offset product starts at around \$35 per tonne. However, offsetting is only ever a partial solution, and a risky one, too. According to a recent **Guardian study**, many of the world’s most traded offsets are not actually reducing emissions. Even “good” carbon offsetting projects can take years to take effect.

Instead, you might consider using the funds you’d otherwise spend on offsets to invest in ‘in-house’ or hyper-local initiatives that further reduce your business’s emissions and overall impact.

Some ideas include:

- Increase your sustainability budgets to invest in energy-efficient lighting, rooftop solar, supply chain analysis, waste procedures, and strategy days to foster environmental leadership.
- Donate to Green Music Australia to support our leadership and advocacy work.
- Partner with local landcare groups to regenerate the country your event is taking place on.
- Create case studies to inspire your peers.

This doesn't mean we think traditional offsetting is a bad idea, but in some cases, other options may be more beneficial in the long term for your business and the planet.

Want to know more? Read our [complete guide to offsetting](#) including a list of recommended offset providers.

ENERGY CHECKLIST

At the end of each chapter, we will create a quick action summary for you to refer back to. Use this checklist to track what you're already doing and plan next steps.

Category	Action	Check
Reduce Your Energy Consumption	Draught proof windows and doors, check fridge seals regularly, and turn off devices when not needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Install insulation, particularly around windows and in ceilings, to improve comfort and reduce energy needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Replace inefficient lighting, equipment, and machinery with energy-efficient options.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Undertake an energy audit	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Discuss energy-saving opportunities with your team and set guidelines for using air conditioners, equipment, and lights.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Install an energy monitor	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Switch Energy Sources	Investigate the viability of solar panels and batteries for your premises.
Switch to a green electricity provider .		<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchase 100% GreenPower™ to encourage divestment from coal and gas.		<input type="checkbox"/>
Switch from gas appliances to electric.		<input type="checkbox"/>

Food

Global food production accounts for a third of human-induced planet-heating gases, with meat production making up 60%. That's why, when it comes to serving food, we recommend increasing plant-based and vegetarian choices. Not only does this help the planet, but it also means you'll be catering to more people's dietary needs.

Try to maximise:

- Plant-based
- Local
- Seasonal
- Organic and/or biodynamic produce

You might even like to set targets. **This might look like:**

- Minimum of 70% of dishes served are vegetarian
- Minimum of 25% dishes served are vegan friendly

For venues that serve meals, food waste can have a significant environmental impact. In fact, NSW EPA reports that food waste accounts for **over 60%** of bin contents in average cafés and restaurants.

The Queensland Government recently released this detailed guide on how to **reduce food waste at your business** through procurement and storage practices, and creating smart menus which use similar ingredients to minimise wastage.

If you're in NSW, the free **Your Business is Food program** can help support you to review and reduce your venue's food waste.

You should also consider how you print menus. Using QR codes or having digital displays can reduce paper consumption and gives you flexibility to alter your menu as needed! When you do need to print, use paper that has recycled content (as close to 100% as possible).

CASE STUDY: Brunswick Ballroom serving sustainably

Our friends at Brunswick Ballroom, located on Wurundjeri Country in Melbourne, ask attendees who want a seated meal and show to **pre-book their dinner**. By enabling pre-orders, staff have 100% certainty around produce supply and preparation, cutting food waste and staffing costs. This also reduces the number of food deliveries throughout the week, helping to lower their indirect carbon emissions.

FOOD CHECKLIST

At the end of each chapter, we will create a quick action summary for you to refer back to. Use this checklist to track what you're already doing and plan next steps.

Category	Action	Check
Food	Prioritise plant-based, seasonal, local and organic food and ingredients.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Increase your plant-based meals.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Offer incentives or options that help reduce food waste, such as storing ingredients correctly or encouraging patrons to pre-book meals.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Use QR codes instead of printing menus.	<input type="checkbox"/>



The Servo, Port Kembla. Photo: Supplied by venue

Beverages

Many of the considerations for sustainable food also apply to beverage procurement, such as maximising local drinks to reduce freight impacts and opting for refillable keg systems wherever possible to minimise waste.



*Brunswick Ballroom Director, Will Ewing, pouring a wine from the keg.
Photo: Green Music Australia*

CASE STUDY: Kegs of House Wine at Brunswick Ballroom

Everyone loves a good house wine, but did you know that you can now buy wine in a keg, with a tap? **Green Action Program** participant Brunswick Ballroom recently changed their house red to a keg, saving the production of **16,000 bottles per year**—and a huge reduction in production emissions, recycling and transport. So good.

WATER

Keeping folks hydrated is non-negotiable. Ensure front-of-house water refill stations are easy to access, stocked with reusable cups, and can accommodate filling reusable bottles. The same applies backstage, having reusable and dishwasher bottles on hand are the perfect zero-waste back up for artists and staff who need a sealable vessel.

It's also important to communicate with your audience that bottles are welcome—be sure to include BYO Bottle information on your website. We worked with Max Watts House of Music to trial reusable bottles for staff, artists, and crew.

CASE STUDY: Max Watts Goes #BYOBottle

Popular Melbourne live music venue, Max Watts, piloted a BYO bottle initiative to reduce thousands of plastic bottles from landfill each year.

In partnership with Green Music, pre-filled reusable water bottles were placed backstage and at bars for all artists, staff and security.

What started as a 2-month trial to gauge interest quickly expanded due to its success. Out of the 300 reusable bottles loaned for the trial, only 34 were 'souvenired,' resulting in a mere 5% loss rate per month. In dollar terms, this amounted to just a fraction of what Max Watts had been spending on single-use bottled water.

Become a **BYOBottle venue and join the global community!**

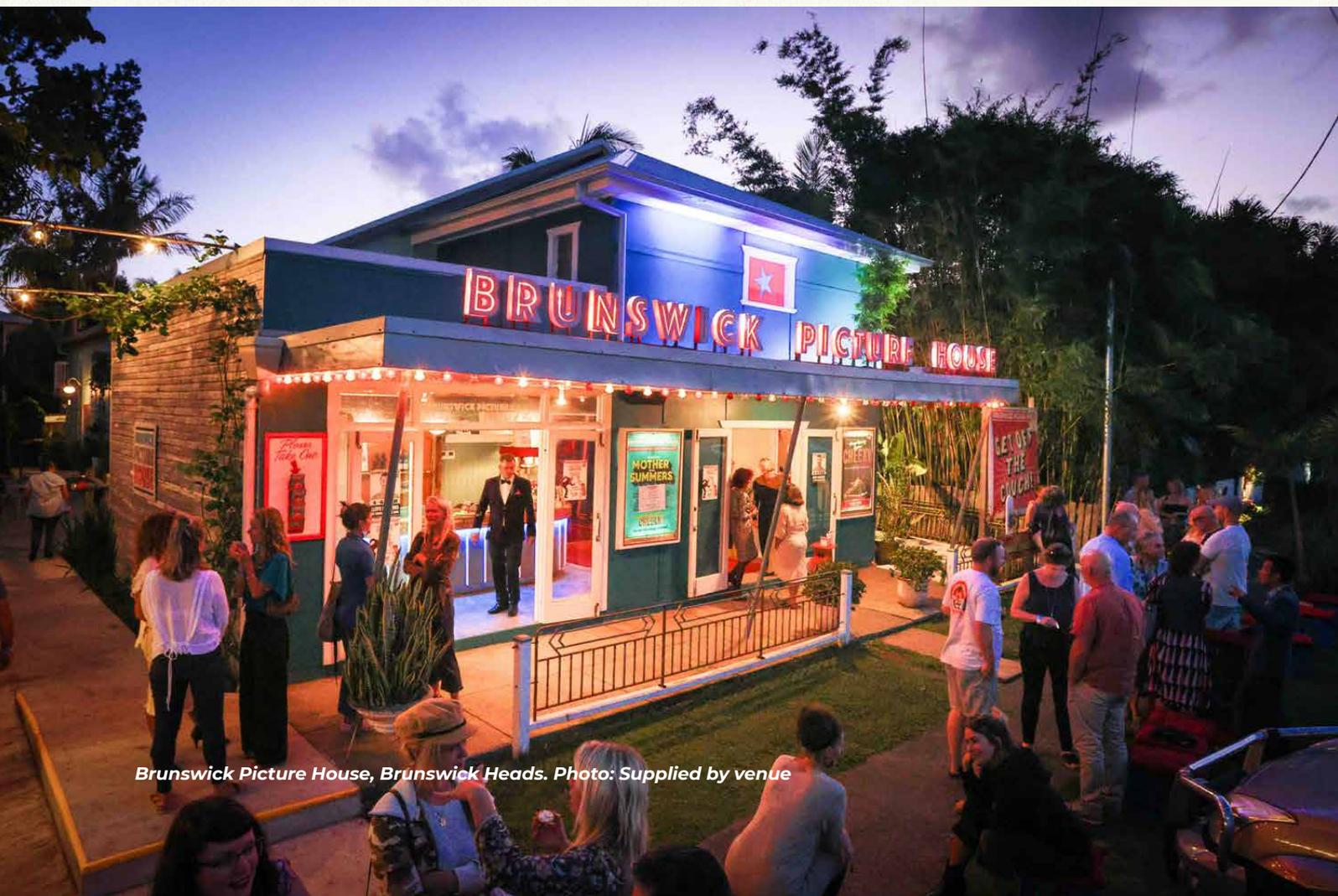


Max Watts with their reusable bottles. Photo: Green Music Australia

BEVERAGES CHECKLIST

At the end of each chapter, we will create a quick action summary for you to refer back to. Use this checklist to track what you're already doing and plan next steps.

Category	Action	Check
Beverages	Encourage artists and fans to BYOBottle and ditch single-use water bottles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Provide accessible water refill stations to patrons and artists.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Consider switching your wine and beer to kegs, barrels and taps to reduce bottle waste.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Opt for local alcohol options to reduce freight impacts.	<input type="checkbox"/>



Brunswick Picture House, Brunswick Heads. Photo: Supplied by venue

Waste

Every bit of plastic ever created still exists, and we've become used to throwing things away. But in nature, there's no such place as 'away' and single-use items are rapidly clogging up our landfills, waterways, and natural ecosystems.

Instead of trying to control the mess we create, let's avoid it in the first place by reducing what we need, repairing what we can, and, if those things aren't possible, purchasing from ethical companies that use minimal packaging.

In general, following the waste hierarchy is the best way to align with the needs of our living planet:

1. **Reduce**
2. **Reuse**
3. **Recycle**
4. **Dispose**

The first step is to reduce the amount of waste that comes into your venue in the first place.

You might consider:

- Purchasing items with minimal packaging and updating your procurement policies to reflect this.
- Switching house wine to kegs on tap.
- Sourcing alcoholic spirits from local companies that reuse their bottles.
- Eliminating single-use plastic water bottles.
- Using growlers back of house instead of supplying cans and bottles of beers.
- Providing plastic-free riders and snacks to artists. (You can use our Green Rider Template as a start!)
- Offering pre-ordered meals where possible.
- Creating a business waste policy with dedicated and measurable targets.
- Submit your waste data to Amidesi to understand how your waste impact and costs stack up against comparable venues.

After ensuring you've reduced your waste as much as possible, the next step is making sure what's left is sorted properly. **Ideally you'd separate out these waste streams:**

- Recyclables
- Soft Plastics
- Container Deposit Scheme
- Organic (including food waste)
- Landfill
- Glass
- Electronic waste (e-waste)

We suggest conducting an annual waste audit, which involves emptying all your bins and sorting through the contents to understand how staff are using them. This process helps identify mistakes and areas for improvement.

If you're unsure about proper disposal, check with your council or waste management service. Recycling contamination is a major challenge, so it's crucial venue staff understand what belongs in each bin. For example, soft plastics and e-waste cannot be recycled in council co-mingled bins and often require specialised recycling through services like **Recycle Smart**.

There are plenty of commercial organic waste options including on-site systems and collecting services, as well as companies like **Bottlecycler** who specialise in glass bottle crushing and recycling in hospitality venues.

You may also like to consider having a specific place for artists to place used batteries backstage. Planet Ark has a **fantastic online resource** which helps you find the closest recycling centres for unusual waste items—you could even order your own **collection box**.

FOOD WASTE

Organics waste is a significant issue in Australia. When food scraps end up in landfill, they decompose poorly and release methane, a potent greenhouse gas. According to the **Climate Council**, methane traps 85 times more heat than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period Yikes!

Wherever possible, food and other organic wastes should be separated from your landfill collection. Some places in Australia have access to FOGO bins. There are also some innovative communities that have their own community gardens who can collect and dispose of this waste on your behalf. Even better, if you have some outdoor space, why not look at composting your own green waste on site? Composting your organic waste properly ensures that you significantly reduce your venue's carbon emissions. For more tips on how to reduce food waste, check out the Food chapter (page 11).

PRINT GREEN

Don't forget to reduce your waste in your office space too.

- Avoid unnecessary printing and switch to stamps instead of wristbands.
- Use a printer that does double-sided copying and set it as default.
- Refill or recycle ink and toner cartridges.
- Buy copy paper that's 100% post-consumer recycled or FSC certified and use vegetable-based printing inks.

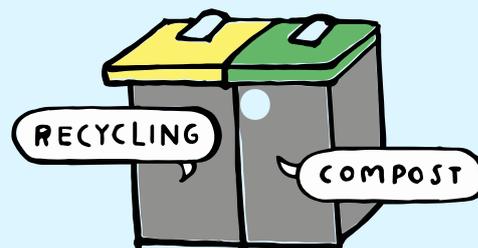
CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEMES

Container Deposit Schemes have been introduced across the country—reducing the number of cans and single-use bottles going to landfill by offering money for the return of selected items. It's a great system and could help to fund some of your upcoming sustainability initiatives.

You can even choose to deposit your funds to local environmental organisations, like Green Music Australia! Don't have time to send them yourself? There's a number of businesses who can collect for you such as **Re-Collect** and **Envirobank**.

Visit your local state or territory's website for more information:

- [Australian Capital Territory](#)
- [New South Wales](#)
- [Northern Territory](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Tasmania](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [Western Australia](#)



WASTE CHECKLIST

At the end of each chapter, we will create a quick action summary for you to refer back to. Use this checklist to track what you're already doing and plan next steps.

Category	Action	Check
Reduce	Encourage artists and fans to BYOBottle and ditch single-use water bottles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Provide accessible water refill stations to patrons and artists.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Consider switching your wine and beer to kegs, barrels and taps to reduce bottle waste.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Opt for local alcohol options to reduce freight impacts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sorting & Disposal	Audit how your waste is being disposed of to find savings and areas of improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Set up sorting facilities and signage to ensure all waste is being recycled and disposed of correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Consider organic waste disposal options to reduce food waste sent to landfill.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Train your staff on best practice waste management.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cups, Crockery & Cutlery



SINGLE-USE, NO WAY

Have a venue with a kitchen or dishwashers? If so, there should be no excuse for using single-use cups. Reusables not only help reduce waste but can also save you money on single-use water bottles, cups, and crockery over time.

In fact, many states and territories have begun to restrict and ban the sale of single-use plastics including straws, stirrers, polystyrene and more. Check out the [National Retail Association's webpage](#) for up-to-date information and guidance on your state laws.

WHAT ABOUT BIODEGRADABLE AND COMPOSTABLE ALTERNATIVES?

There are lots of buzz words and jargon when it comes to sustainability, making it hard to make sense of what is truly 'green.'

Put simply, **biodegradable plastic** decomposes faster than regular plastic, but often turns into microplastics that can contaminate recycling streams.

Compostable crockery and cups are made from organic materials that degrade under specific conditions and within a set timeframe. There are different types of compostable products:

- **Home Compostable:** A material which breaks down in home compost.
- **Industrially Compostable:** A material which can only degrade using industrial composting processes and equipment.

Unless you have access to a home composting system or a commercial composter, compostable packaging is no better than plastic. We contacted several Brisbane commercial composters, and none were willing to accept 'compostable' plastic cups, particularly after discovering that many contain PFAS (aka 'forever chemicals'). New South Wales has taken a similar approach, banning compostable plastics from their Food and Organic Waste bins.

Brisbane City Council published this on their website: "Biodegradable products are usually made from plastic with chemicals added, causing them to break down into smaller pieces. This can lead to micro-plastics being released into the environment, and residents are encouraged to avoid packaging marked as 'biodegradable'. Disposal: Items labelled 'biodegradable' are not recyclable and must be placed in your general waste bin (red lid)."

Research shows that reusables out perform compostable cups on every metric. If you want a deeper dive, check out this amazing report by US non-profit [Upstream](#).

To sum it up? Reusable cups, crockery, and cutlery win every time!

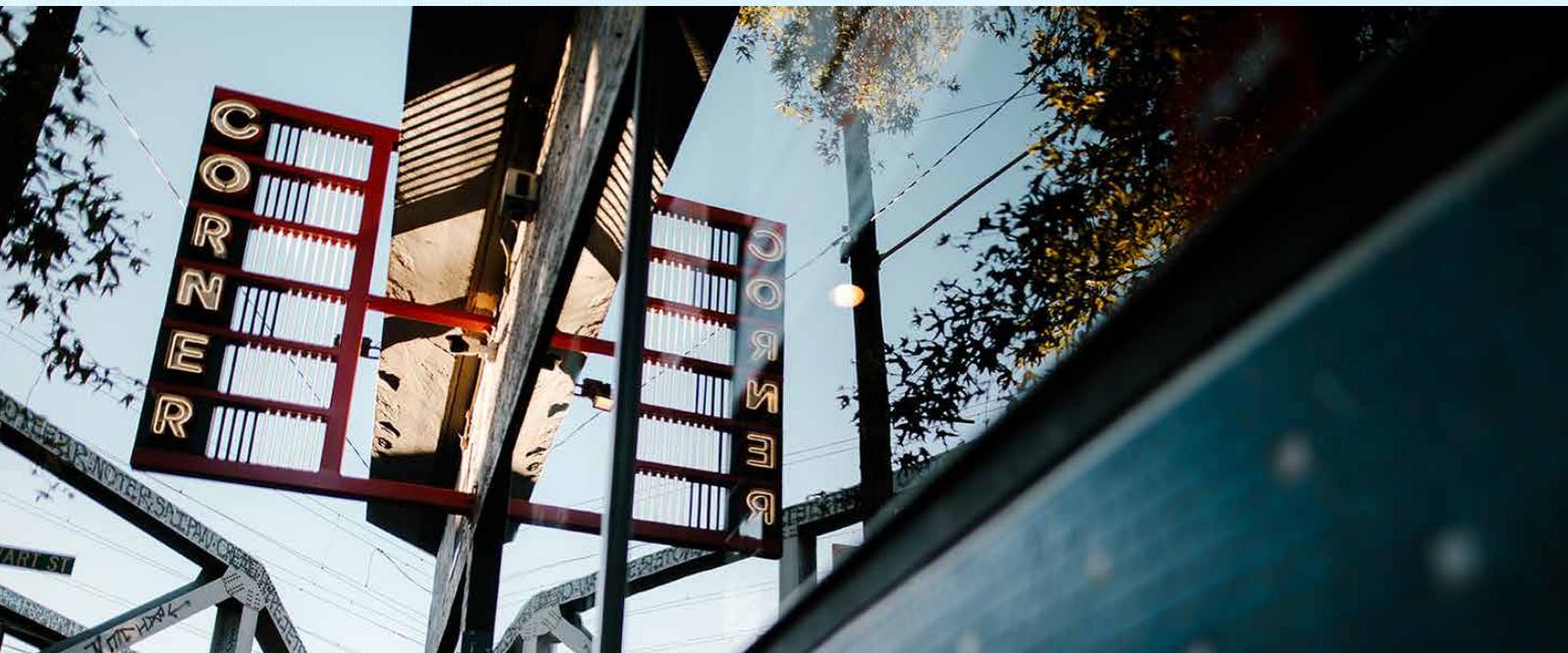
Water

To protect our precious water resources, it's essential we all take steps to reduce our usage. Here are some actions you can take right away to lower both consumption and costs:

- Check for leaky taps and pipes across your venue.
- Keep an eye on your water meter to spot any unexpected spikes in usage.
- Swap to dual flush toilets.
- Install rainwater tanks if you have the space.
- Switch to bathroom taps that are low flow or automatically turn off.
- Opt for water efficient dishwashers and washing machines.

Cleaning

It's possibly the least glamorous side of running a live music business, but nobody likes a dirty bathroom. So, what are you using? Harsh chemicals harm human health and poison our water ways. If you haven't already, consider switching to chemical-free cleaning.



CASE STUDY: Cleaning With eWater

eWater is an organic certified solution that naturally biodegrades leaving no chemical residue. With onsite production reducing both harsh chemicals and single-use plastic waste, eWater is one sustainable option to consider. Our friends at the Corner Group and the Marriner Group both use this system.

"We've managed to cut down drastically on chemicals, we now stock next to nothing!"
– **The Corner Hotel**, Victoria

WATER & CLEANING CHECKLIST

At the end of each chapter, we will create a quick action summary for you to refer back to. Use this checklist to track what you're already doing and plan next steps.

Category	Action	Check
Water Use & Cleaning	Conserve water use by checking for leaky taps and plumbing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Install dual-flush toilets and upgrade to water-efficient dishwashers and washing machines.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Install low-flow or sensor-activated taps that switch off automatically.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ensure when purchasing washing machines and dishwashers that they have a high water rating.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Install rainwater tanks (if you have space).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Switch to chemical-free cleaning products.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Travel & Transport

Audience travel is one of your biggest indirect environmental impacts. You can't control the infrastructure or services around you, but you can influence your travel emissions by communicating clearly and encouraging your audience, artists, and staff to take greener alternatives.

- Promote the use of legs, bicycles and public transport to get to your venue.
- Consider installing bike racks and offering incentives for people who do the green thing.
- Make sure you have clear instructions on tickets, emails, and your website about how to catch public transport / ride / walk to your venue.
- Consider installing electric vehicle charging in your parking areas. Or advocate for your local council to do so in nearby street parking.
- Communicate set times in advance so audience members can plan their public transport journey.

Not sure how to best relay transport information to your audience? Copy the below template for your next tour's ticketing, website and email communications!

VENUE NAME encourages you to get to the show sustainably! Plan your trip using Google Maps/Journey Planner to take public transport.

TRAIN: Just a X-minute walk from TRAIN STATION on the TRAIN LINE.

BUS: Bus stops for routes 123, 234, and 345 are just X minutes from VENUE on STREET NAME.

BIKE: Bicycle racks are available outside VENUE or at LOCATION.

Take the pledge to travel by public transport and score a discount on your ticket, plus a chance to win a merch pack!

You might also want to review your business travel and cut down on transport. Try organising online meetings and reducing staff flights whenever possible.



TRAVEL & TRANSPORT CHECKLIST

At the end of each chapter, we will create a quick action summary for you to refer back to. Use this checklist to track what you're already doing and plan next steps.

Category	Action	Check
Encourage Better Transport	Provide public transport details on tickets, emails, and your website and use incentives to encourage audiences to use sustainable transport to reach your venue.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Install bike racks.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Install electric vehicle charging.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Supply backline to artists.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Minimise staff air travel.	<input type="checkbox"/>



NMOADP projected onto Corner Hotel wall. Photo: @rcstills

Operations & Management

A lot happens behind the scenes – from admin and management to decisions about suppliers and staffing. Here’s a list of easy actions you can take today to make your back office workspaces greener and more efficient.

ENGAGE YOUR STAFF

Embedding sustainability into the day-to-day operations is vital to ensure you can effectively improve your performance. There’s no point having a 5-STAR green building if you have people leaving doors open, lights on, and not understanding why you do what you do. Without staff buy-in and training, your sustainability initiatives won’t get off the ground.

You might consider:

- Creating an environmental action plan with clear sustainability, energy, and waste goals.
- Designating a Sustainability Manager to lead initiatives and report progress to the board.

- Sharing targets with staff and celebrating those who contribute ideas for improvement.
- Training staff on sustainability practices during inductions and providing waste disposal signage.
- Placing signage in key areas of the venue to guide waste disposal and sustainability efforts.
- Formalising end-of-day procedures, like turning off equipment and waste management protocols.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

In this guide we dive a little deeper into First Nations First (see page 3), however there are other ways you need to ensure that your operations are inclusive of all people. All businesses should consider creating a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy that is integrated into staff inductions and regular training. The policy should aim to foster fair treatment, opportunity, and representation for all individuals, particularly those from historically marginalised or underrepresented groups.

ACCESSIBILITY

It's important that all venues consider how their space can be equitably accessed by people with a disability.

For more resources on how to develop an accessibility plan for your venue, [Accessible Arts](#) have plenty of resources and guidance on where to start.

CONSIDER YOUR SUPPLIERS

When onboarding new suppliers, ask if they have an environmental policy. This helps spark broader conversations about sustainability across the industry.

Put them in touch with Green Music Australia if they are doing anything great. And where possible, prioritise suppliers who are willing to make an effort, or are local, low carbon and waste, certified organic, ethical, Fairtrade, or whatever other factors you rate as important. Imagine the impact if we all asked!

If you're struggling to find a suitable supplier, reach out to us! We are here to help and can point you in the right direction.

MERCHANDISE & UNIFORMS

If you sell merchandise or manufacture uniforms, there are a range of ways that you can reduce your impact. Did you know that the majority of new clothing is made of plastic? 60% of new clothes are made from synthetic fibres which never biodegrade. Instead, they break down into smaller parts, polluting our waterways and oceans with microplastics.

There are some simple steps you can take to **minimise your impact**:

- Choose garments made from organic or recycled materials to reduce pesticide use and landfill.
- Collect and reuse uniforms from staff.
- Avoid creating event-specific uniforms that can't be reused.
- Source garments from companies with sustainability policies.
- Look for certifications like FairTrade on products.
- Print smaller runs to minimise excess stock.
- Opt for eco-friendly inks.
- Recycle irreparable uniforms at the end of their life.

For more advice, visit the Fashion & Merchandise chapter in our [Sound Country guide](#).

MOVE YOUR MONEY

It doesn't make sense for us to be dreaming and working towards a greener future if the money in our bank accounts and super funds is simultaneously propping up the kinds of projects we don't want. Did you know that most of our major banks are still invested in fossil fuel projects?

Our friends at [Market Forces](#) believe that financial institutions should direct their resources to protect, not harm, the environment. Use the guides on their website to make the switch to a [greener bank](#) and recommended staff [super fund](#).

While you're at it, consider switching to [ArtsPay](#) for your EFTPOS terminals. The payment terminal integrates with POS systems and donates 50% of its profits to the arts.

GREEN YOUR TICKETING

Directing a small portion of your ticketing revenue to environmental action is one of the most powerful ways you can influence green change. Here's are some great options:

- Consider adding a nominal dollar figure (i.e. \$1 / \$2) to your ticket sales to help pay for your in-house environmental initiatives.
- Work with non-profit ticketing providers like Humanitix who put their profits towards sustainable projects, such as literacy programs for young women.

CASE STUDY: Beyond the Valley's Partnership with Humanitix Generates \$250K for Charity

Audience members who attended the 2022 edition of Beyond the Valley kicked-in \$250,000 for good causes, many of them without even realising it.

More than 30,000 people walked through the gates, contributing a quarter-million dollars from the four-day fest's booking fees. The majority of that sum went towards Yalari, an organisation which provides Indigenous children from regional, rural and remote communities across the country the opportunity to receive a full boarding school scholarship for their entire secondary education. [Find out more](#)

SHARE YOUR WINS

Don't forget to power-up your impact by sharing your enthusiasm, practices and learnings with the people you work with like your suppliers, agents, bands, staff, and audiences.

Talking about it will also help you benefit from the goodwill you'll generate by being green and awesome. Some tips on how to communicate what you do to **amplify your impact**:

- Promote the great work you do for the planet on your website and social media channels and stand out from the crowd. Nobody expects you to be perfect. Admit you're having a go and be open to feedback.
- Let artists know your aspirations and vision. Include your environmental initiatives in an introduction email and/or your venue induction for new artists, showing them how they can help you make the venue green and giving them a chance to make any suggestions.
- Talk to other venues, councils, landlords and neighbours about your goals, and find ways to work together to achieve shared benefits.
- Promote Green Music Australia's *Sound Country* guide to artists performing in your venue

ADVERTISING

Advertising companies are getting greener! Rock Posters offers *outdoor posters* made from post-consumer waste and printed with vegetable-based ink. *Enviro-Print* sells 100% recycled corflute signs, while *Corex* offers recycled and carbon-neutral options that you can return for recycling. Bailey Print Group even upcycles event banners into *tote bags*.

Of course, it's always better to reduce before recycling—so try cutting down on what you need to print in the first place!

FUNDING YOUR GREEN INITIATIVES

Many people think going green is too expensive, but that's not always the case. While big-ticket items like solar panels can require a larger investment, many environmental initiatives are more immediately affordable. Plus, most of them will save you money on your bills in the long run!

A key step is to include an annual sustainability spend in your operations budget. Other ways you can fund your green operations include:

Arts Grants

If you're applying for an arts grant, add a line item to cover your sustainability initiatives. Many grant funders are beginning to ask about sustainability in their applications, and others view applications which address sustainability more favourably.

Sustainability Grants

There are sustainability and environment grants available for all types of business models (non-profit, small to medium businesses). We keep a list of useful grants here. You can also subscribe to our music industry newsletter '*SYNTHESISE*' to learn about upcoming grant rounds.



The Corner Hotel. Photo: Supplied by venue

Cost Savings

Use operational savings from sustainability initiatives to offset upfront costs. Take the Corner Hotel, for example. After completing an energy audit as part of the Green Action Program, they found that investing around \$15,000 upfront in energy-efficient lighting and equipment could save them **over \$20,000 annually** for the next decade. That's a massive \$185,000 return on investment!

Some ways you can reduce your costs and improve your green credentials include: improving insulation, reducing your waste, switching to energy efficient appliances, and installing solar panels.

Ticketing

Allocate a portion of each ticket sale towards funding your sustainability operations. By doing so, you can help audiences become more connected to your green journey, while also ensuring you have funds to implement your projects.

Not sure where or how to allocate your funds? There are plenty of great organisations who can help out including us here at Green Music Australia and **FEAT's Solar Slice program**.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Remember to always put mental health - and the mental health of your team - first. Nobody is a perfect advocate for the living planet, and the music industry can be a challenging place to work at the best of times. We need you healthy, connected and strong. So go easy on yourself, take it step by step, and reach out for help when you need it.

OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

At the end of each chapter, we will create a quick action summary for you to refer back to. Use this checklist to track what you're already doing and plan next steps.

Category	Action	Check
Governance & Strategy	Establish a venue sustainability plan or policy including targets and KPIs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Provide staff with training on environmental, social, and governance policies during induction and annual training sessions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Research information about accessibility (refer to Accessibility in the Resources section on page 31).	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy that is included in staff induction and annual training sessions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money	Switch your banking and superannuation to a climate friendly ethical option.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Use a payment provider like ArtsPay for EFTPOS terminals.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suppliers	Create a sustainable procurement policy and talk to suppliers about their environmental commitments. Prioritise those who align with your values.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocacy & Support	Communicate your sustainability ambitions and wins with your stakeholders and audience.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Create a sustainability page on your website.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Contribute financially to an environmental organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Consider a "green or social surcharge" to your ticket sales.	<input type="checkbox"/>

NSW Specific Resources

Based in NSW? Here's some local resources that might help you on your journey:

- **Organics Waste:** In 2021-22, the NSW Commercial and Industrial sector generated 4.75 million tonnes of waste, with food and organics making up the majority. Landfill waste in this sector accounted for 4% of total emissions in New South Wales.
- By 2030, the NSW EPA aims to **halve organics waste**, expecting all businesses to implement FOGO systems. Keep an eye out for new initiatives in this space.
- **Sustainable Business Directory:** The Better Business Partnership offers a directory and hosts events across the state. [Visit their website here.](#)
- **Funding:** Green Music Australia has compiled an extensive list of NSW-specific grants to help music businesses go green. [Access the list here.](#)
- **City of Sydney Resources:** If you're within the City of Sydney, check out the council's [resources and grant programs here.](#)
- **Music Sustainability Catch-Ups:** Green Music Australia and MusicNSW partner every six months to host music sustainability catch-ups. Interested? Drop us a line at info@greenmusic.org.au.

Queensland Specific Resources

Are you from Queensland? Check out these local resources:

- **Brisbane City Council Sustainability Grants:** Non-profit venues can apply for [these grants](#). Not a non-profit? You can be auspiced by one—Q Music and Green Music Australia are both not-for-profit organisations.
- **Waste Resources:** Brisbane City Council provides waste signage and information on their [website](#), along with a [free consultation](#) to help improve your waste systems. Signage and information are available on the [Brisbane City Council website](#).
- **EcoBiz Program:** This free program, funded by the Queensland Government, helps small to medium businesses develop action plans for waste, water, and energy management. With the support of an EcoBiz expert, you can reduce costs, improve efficiencies, and join over 1,000 businesses statewide—90% of which reported productivity and savings increases.
- **Plastic Ban:** As of September 2022, Queensland has [banned most plastic single-use items](#).

Other Resources

GREEN ARTIST GUIDE - SOUND COUNTRY

Share *Sound Country* a free 100+ page green artist guide with your artists and managers.

NATIONAL CITY SWITCH PROGRAM

City Switch is a national organisation that aims to help office-based businesses get to net zero emissions. They have lots of wonderful resources on their website and host regular major city catch ups to help you understand energy, waste and carbon accounting. For more information, check out their website [here](#).

ACCESSIBILITY

There are brilliant peak bodies across Australia working on accessibility in the music and arts scene. Access resources and advice from your state below:

- **ACT:** [Accessible Arts](#)
- **NSW:** [Accessible Arts](#)
- **NT:** [Incite Arts](#)
- **QLD:** [Access Arts](#)
- **SA:** [Access2Arts](#)
- **VIC:** [Arts Access Victoria](#)
- **WA:** [Access All Arts](#)

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Support Act is the music industry's charity, delivering crisis relief services to musicians, managers, crew and music workers across all genres who are unable to work due to ill health, injury, a mental health problem or some other crisis.

General Support Line: 1800 959 500 (24/7)

First Nations Dedicated Support Line 1800 861 085 (24/7)

Email: support@supportact.org.au

Acknowledgements

This guide is produced by Green Music Australia. Green Music Australia is a registered charity, harnessing the cultural power of our influential music scene to create a greener, safer future.

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CONTRIBUTORS

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OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS



Eco-Glossary

We've created a cheat sheet to help you avoid 'greenwash' and make better choices.

Biodegradable Plastic

A type of plastic that **degrades faster** than regular plastic, breaking down into microplastics that contaminate the environment.

Bio-Plastic

A catch-all term that often refers to a form of plastic made from renewable sources like corn starch or sugar cane. They **often end up in landfill** as there are limited ways to process or recycle them at their end of life.

Carbon Emissions

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) gas/emissions released into the atmosphere following the burning of fossil fuels. It is the largest source of greenhouse gases contributing to global warming.

Carbon Footprint

The quantity of carbon dioxide emissions generated directly or indirectly from an activity, individual, or organisation.

Carbon Neutral

When an activity or organisation balances the amount of greenhouse gases it emits with an equivalent reduction in another area. This is typically done via the use of carbon offsets.

Carbon Offset

A way of compensating for your climate impact - it doesn't stop or reduce it, but supports others to reduce the impact somewhere else on your behalf. It's often completed by purchasing carbon credits from a supplier. In return they use your money for initiatives like planting trees or building renewable energy infrastructure. Check out our **Offset Guide for more information here.**

Circular Economy

A concept being adopted in communities across Australia and globally, focused on keeping products and materials in circulation to reduce waste and landfill. It promotes the production of high-quality, durable products that can be reused and repurposed, alongside circular supply chains where waste becomes an input for new production

Closed Loop

A system where post-consumer products are recycled and reused to create a new version of the same product.

Compostable

Made from organic materials, these products break down and degrade under specific conditions and within a set timeframe. While all compostable materials are biodegradable, not all biodegradable materials are compostable. There are different types of compostable products:

- **Home Compostable:** Materials that can degrade in home compost.
- **Industrially Compostable:** Materials that require industrial composting processes to degrade.

Though compostable items are often seen as an eco-friendly alternative, emerging evidence suggests they may not always be the best solution, as some can **release PFAS (forever chemicals) into the environment.**

COP

An annual international climate meeting held by the United Nations. COP stands for "Conference of the Parties" and refers to the annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

which aims to set targets and agreements to reduce global emissions and address climate change.

Downcycling

A process where a product is repurposed to create a product of lesser value than the original. This is a very common process. In fact, most 'recycling' is actually downcycling. Examples include cardboard recycled into toilet paper and plastic water bottles recycled into fleece or insulation.

FOGO

Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) refers to the kerbside waste collection services which turn food scraps and garden waste into compost, operating in some local districts in Australia.

Fossil Fuel

Refers to non-renewable energy sources like coal, oil and natural gas. Fossil Fuels create greenhouse gases when burnt, contributing to climate change.

FSC

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a certification process which audits forestry practices. There are different levels of FSC certification available, use the **Ethical Paper Guide** for up-to-date advice on the best certified paper stock available. Remember, 100% recycled paper is always better than cutting down a tree.

Greenhouse Effect

The process of gases in the atmosphere trapping the sun's heat. **As the concentration of greenhouse gases increase**, more heat is trapped causing Earth's temperature to rise.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs)

Greenhouse gases are the gases which trap heat in the atmosphere. The most common greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone, and chlorofluorocarbons.

Greenwashing

When an organisation claims or advertises itself to be more environmentally friendly and sustainable than it truly is. Sadly, this

is a common occurrence across businesses and governments.

Microplastics

Tiny pieces of plastic less than five millimetres in size. They occur from the breakdown of larger plastics and cause severe human health and environmental impacts.

Net Zero

A balance between greenhouse gas emitted and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere. To avoid a dangerous global temperature rise of over 1.5C, we must get as close to zero emissions as quickly as possible.

Current net-zero government commitments across the world fall far short of keeping the world under 1.5C degrees of warming. And many governments are not meeting those commitments.

Paris Agreement

A legally binding treaty on climate change. Signed in 2015 by governments across the world, its goal is to hold **"the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels" and pursue efforts "to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels."**

Under the agreement, each signatory country must communicate actions they will take to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. These actions are expected to increase in ambition every five years to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the globe.

At present, countries are not committing to the level of ambition and action required in order to achieve this goal.

PFAS

Commonly referred to as 'forever chemicals,' PFAS stands for perfluoroalkyl or polyfluorinated alkyl substances. A group of over 14,000 human-made chemicals which are heavily resistant to heat, water, grease and stains.

Regularly found in household products like frying pans and food packaging, there is emerging research and evidence that these chemicals are harmful to both human health and the environment.

Recycling

The process where materials are processed and repurposed to make a new version of the same product. i.e. an aluminum can may be recycled to create a new aluminum can.

This is different to upcycling or downcycling, explained elsewhere in this glossary.

Renewable Energy

Energy that is generated from natural sources that can be ***replenished at a higher rate than they are consumed***. Wind and sunshine are two examples of renewables. Renewable energy generates significantly less greenhouse gas emissions than fossil fuel energy.

Scope 1, 2, and 3 Emissions

The standard way of reporting and accounting for carbon emissions within businesses. Many organisations will develop net-zero targets for their Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. The concept can be a little complex, but can be briefly summarised as:

Scope 1: Emissions generated directly from operations (i.e. burning of gas in vehicles)

Scope 2: Emissions generated from purchased electricity

Scope 3: All other emissions sources

For more information on Scope 1, 2 and 3, ***Work For Climate has a great article*** which unpacks each Scope in further detail.

Upcycling

When material is processed and repurposed into a new product of greater value than the original.

