Contents

1 Acknowledgement
3 Introduction
4 About Us
7 The Big Picture
9 Going Green: In Summary
13 Going Green: In Detail
15 First Nations First
23 Speaking Up
32 Office & Studio
39 Waste
45 Transportation
49 Food
51 Fashion & Merchandise
59 Acknowledgments

The launch and implementation of Sound Country: A Green Artist Guide has been supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.
Acknowledgment

Green Music Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and meet. We recognise their continuing connection to the land, waterways and sky country.

When musicians stand up and speak up for our living world, we’re following the lead of First Peoples and their ongoing stewardship of tens of thousands of years. We acknowledge that this land was stolen and that sovereignty has never been ceded. We recognise the leadership role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within the Australian community - including the music scene.

For thousands of generations, music, song and dance heard across this continent was 100% Aboriginal; a diversity of first instruments, mother tongues, rituals and annual gatherings. We pay our respects to the custodial wisdom keepers of the old ways. We commit to listening deeply, allowing the narrative of today’s tradition bearers to be heard, ensuring eons of oral story and the connection to ancient knowledge lines across Country is valued and maintained for coming generations.
You’re an artist. You care about our living planet and you want your music-making to be as green as possible. This guide is for you.
Introduction

There are lots of reasons to go green. Shit’s getting real. That isn’t news to anyone. Everything we love is at risk. The very conditions for life on Earth are threatened.

At a deeper level, this crisis represents a fault between our modern society and the living planet. The truth is, we are nature. So what we do to Mother Earth, we do to ourselves. It’s time we honoured that truth and returned home to more harmonious ways of being.

As our summers heat up, as fires and floods get worse and our living planet buckles under the strain of the modern world, it’s natural for us to want to step up. We know that a planetary environmental crisis can’t be solved with individual efforts – it needs coordinated, collective action. Right now, many people are asking ‘What can I do?’. As musicians, we can do more than most because we can lead and inspire broader social change.

Musicians have a platform and a voice, so we’ve got a role to play in both doing what’s right and in speaking up about it. With power comes responsibility, as they say. We want to help you use your cultural power well.

That’s what Sound Country is about: for thousands of generations, the music of this continent was connected to Country in spirit and action. We’re here to support musicians to reconnect, realign and reinspire that ancient and still-breathing purpose.

Well my body, is like this land
And this land, this land, this land
This land’s the same
And the heart beat keeps on pumping
Oh sweet precious life through your veins

Well the river is like my veins
Carrying sweet, precious life
To the muscles and the brain
Oh the heartbeat begins to wane
Better pray, better pray, better pray
Pray for rain

Into the bloodstream
– Archie Roach, Gunditjmara and Bundjalung Elder and musician (from the song: Into The Bloodstream)
About Us

This guide has been produced by Green Music Australia.

It’s one of the many ways we support, organise and inspire musicians and the broader industry to improve environmental performance – from events, energy use, tours and transport, to merchandise, packaging and waste. Leading by example and bringing our audiences along with us, we believe the music sector can create deep, cultural change.

Let us support you. Our job is to help artists go green and find ways to share their stories. If this guide speaks to you, reach out and join the movement of musicians across this wonderful continent who are greening their practice and standing up for a healthy and safe future.

Authors

This guide has been written by: Rhoda Roberts AO, revered Bundjalung arts executive and producer; Matt Wicking, environmental consultant, facilitator and musician; and Green Music Australia.

See the end of the guide for author bios and a list of other wonderful contributors.
There are so many ways musicians can get involved:

**Campaign:** Join our campaigns to add your voice to the calls for change

**Volunteer:** Contribute your time and unique skills to help grow our impact

**Act:** Use the ideas in this guide to go green

**Donate:** Raise money with a tour or gig, or give directly to Green Music Australia (tax deductible above $2)

**Amplify:** Share your actions with your fans, and share this guide with your team and other musicians

**Connect:** Get in touch, let us know you care, and we’ll find a way to work together
In short, this organisation exists to support you. Let’s chat: info@greenmusic.org.au

“At first we thought we were on our own, but then we discovered that there are so many other artists out there who are also participating in the Green Music movement. Here’s to creating a better, safer and healthier planet for us all to thrive on.”

– In Hearts Wake
Principles for Going Green

This guide is full of tips and tricks for greening your musical life. Let’s start with some high-level principles to consider as you take action.

**Earth-Centred**

We need to put life and living systems at the centre, where they belong. Our only home in the universe, Mother Earth is the source of all we hold dear – including music. And her land, waterways, creatures and sky have inherent value of their own.

**First Nations First**

When a person steps forward to care for our living world, we follow the lead of the Indigenous peoples who have been caring for Country for tens of thousands of years. To do this ‘greening’ work, we need to normalise Indigenous leadership and dismantle the systemic racism, colonisation and oppression in our industry and wider culture.

**Action-Oriented**

On the journey to a greener future, it isn’t always easy to see the road ahead. Instead of shooting for perfection or getting confused about the ideal, guilt-free next step, choose something. There’s no perfect path and action has energy and magic in it.

**Aiming Upwards**

Rather than just cleaning up the mess at the end, go as far up the chain as you can. Reduce and reuse before recycling; avoid energy use and improve efficiency before buying solar panels or offsets; choose easy-to-reach venues and advocate for a culture that values greener transport, as well as informing audiences about green transport options.
Deep Impact
As a musician, your cultural footprint is arguably your most important impact. So use your public platform to share what you’re doing, ask questions and connect with others. We need deep, systemic change - not just greener light bulbs or album packaging - and that happens through collective political and cultural change.

Healing for All
Nature isn’t separate from society or our economies. And consumerism, individualism, colonialism and the patriarchy got us into this planetary mess. So we need to align our environmental efforts with other movements for justice, healing and equity – including gender, race, class, sexuality and ability.

“Music is a spiritual, healing, medicinal practice – a very sacred thing... I feel the voices coming through me and I try to honour them, because if we don’t speak certain truths about how we want society to be, it’s never going to get to where we want it to be.”
– Neil Morris aka DRMNGNOW
Going Green: In Summary

This guide is chock full of green tips and ideas for music-makers. But for a quick overview, see how you stack up against the summary checklist of green music actions below.

You might want to use it to make an initial plan with your team and then read on further to flesh out the details with more info, links and recommendations.

It runs from easier First Steps that won’t cause a sweat, to Next Level moves that create more change, and Deep Green actions with potential for epic impacts.

First Steps

These simple actions can be done relatively quickly and easily. They’re mostly individual actions that don’t have the influential power of some further down the list. But they’re good places to start.

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<tr>
<td>Make an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of shows.</td>
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<td>Seek out opportunities to listen and learn from First Peoples.</td>
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<td>Educate fans about public transport options for your concerts.</td>
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<td>Use a quality reusable water bottle, join our #BYObottle campaign, ask for a ban of single use plastic water bottles on your rider and help the industry turn the tide on plastic pollution.</td>
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<td>Use reusable items like bags, straws, coffee cups, plates and cutlery. And eat in when you can.</td>
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<td>Reduce your meat and dairy intake and buy local organic food to reduce transport and pesticide impacts.</td>
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<td>Buy second-hand gear, get it repaired when it breaks and dispose of it thoughtfully.</td>
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<td>Make better personal hygiene choices like plastic-free, waste-free and cruelty-free skincare, haircare and menstrual care.</td>
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<td>Use our Office &amp; Studio chapter to review the green-ness of your workspaces and make a list of improvements.</td>
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<td>Be a role model. Let the media, fans, industry and government know how you feel about the climate emergency, extinction crisis and our relationship with Country.</td>
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<td>Offset your CO2 emissions.</td>
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<td>Get politically active by adding your voice to change: signing petitions like the Music Climate Declaration, going to rallies, and sharing them with your fans.</td>
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<td>Join Green Music Australia’s mailing list to hear more about our news and campaigns and how you can get involved.</td>
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**Next Level**

Take your impact to the next level by changing the ways you work and speaking up as you go.

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<td>Make your Acknowledgement of Country personal: share something deeper about the Country you're on, or talk about what solidarity work you're committed to.</td>
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<td>Ask for a Welcome to Country from Traditional Custodians.</td>
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<td>Advocate for Indigenous musicians, prioritise stage time and support slots, share music and amplify voices.</td>
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<td>Package your releases using recycled cardboard, and ditch the plastic shrink wrap.</td>
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<td>When making new merch, order it on demand in smaller quantities. Better to reorder than be left with boxes of posters, albums and merch under the bed, in storage, or in landfill.</td>
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<td>Set up a donation option when fans buy tickets through Plus1 (you can even donate to Green Music Australia!) or work with ethical, non-profit ticketing providers like Humanitix.</td>
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<td>Add the Solar Slice ticketing surcharge to your tour via FEAT. Live to fund the carbon reduction and offsetting of your tour.</td>
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<td>Book your shows in venues with good public transport, walking and bike access; use sustainable energy sources; and have a sustainability policy or work towards one.</td>
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<td>Green your merch with recycled content, organic cotton and fair trade working conditions.</td>
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<td>Support Indigenous organisations like <a href="https://seed.org.au">SEED Indigenous Youth Climate Network</a> through fundraising shows, a donation button on your website or regular donations of your own.</td>
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<td>Use your influence with peers and audiences – speaking up at shows, in interviews and on social media.</td>
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<td>Tour smarter: use less impactful forms of transport such as swapping planes for trains, cars and vans, use electric vehicles, and improve your scheduling to find the most efficient route.</td>
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<td>At shows, choose catering companies and food stalls that can provide local, mainly-vegetarian food, minimise packaging and dispose of waste thoughtfully.</td>
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<td>Switch to ethical finance companies who don’t invest in fossil fuels, using Market Forces to find a <a href="https://marketforces.org.au">greener bank</a> and <a href="https://marketforces.org.au">super fund</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Get politically active: Contribute your music to a cause by performing at a protest rally or community event or using it as the soundtrack to a documentary or film on a topic you care about.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Join Green Music Australia</strong> in working for change:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Join a campaign</td>
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<td>• Be a sounding board to help us align our work with what musicians need</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Donate to us or raise money with a tour or performance.</td>
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**Sound Country A Green Artist Guide**

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11
Deep Green
Deep transformational shifts are possible when we commit strongly, work together, take chances and build new relationships. Remember, the future is on the line, so this is the moment for us all to dig deep.

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<td>Build trusted and lasting relationships with Indigenous musicians over time by supporting their work, learning about your own power and privilege, and creating space and opportunities for their leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan well by booking direct routes and play larger tours less often to reduce travel time. Consider pre-booked tours to guarantee audiences before you travel.</td>
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<td>Speak to venues, suppliers and service providers to ask for their sustainability policy and to influence their behaviour and policies.</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go carbon neutral by measuring your overall footprint, reducing where you can, then offsetting the rest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reconsider the content of your music. e.g. examine your values and explore themes or intentions that either explicitly or implicitly align your work with the life of Country. See our <a href="#">Spotify playlist</a> and the <a href="#">Environmental Music Prize</a> for inspo.</td>
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<td>Link up with local tree plantings, beach clean ups and other regeneration projects as you tour. For bonus impact, make it visible, letting your fans know what you’re doing and why, and giving them ways of getting involved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get politically active: recruit your peers, fans and your community to build the movement and inspire more people to take positive action.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reconsider your music as a service, not a product, with digital-only music releases and a pivot towards membership or subscription service (like Patreon) to create financial security without the need for intensive merchandise and touring.</td>
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**Join Green Music Australia** in working for deep change:
- Help us reach out to other artists – your peers.
- Refer us to your team so we can reach more parts of the industry (i.e. publishing companies, record labels, and more).
- Join our advisory team to deepen your influence.
Going Green: In Detail

Going ‘green’ means prioritising the living planet – putting Earth at the centre, where she belongs. This guide is here to support you in making this fundamental change as deeply as possible in your approach to music and life.

We’ve broken it into seven chapters, each with guidance and ideas for making your practice more friendly to life on this beautiful, spinning globe:

- **First Nations First**
- **Speaking Up**
- **Office & Studio**
- **Waste**
- **Transport**
- **Food**
- **Fashion & Merch**

This isn’t a book to read cover to cover. Find the advice you need in any chapter you like. At the same time, it’s best to think about Chapters 1 and 2 as you read anything else. When we separate ‘environmental issues’ from human issues like individualism, discrimination and colonisation, we can only ever create shallow change.

That means if you’ve come here just aiming to ‘reduce your personal footprint’ (Chapters 3-7), you’re missing the biggest opportunity of this work. As author (and self-confessed ‘climate hypocrite’) Sami Grover says: “We are not each on an individual journey to slash our footprint to zero. We are on a collective mission to shift the only true footprint that matters: that of society as a whole.”

So please go ahead and use Chapters 3-7 to radically reduce your footprint. You’ll find loads of tips and links here. And you’ll learn about yourself and our world as you go. But as you do, Chapter 2 (Speaking Up) will support you to amplify your impact, and Chapter 1 (First Nations First) is there to offer support in the bigger adventure of shifting power, changing our cultures, and healing our relationship with Country.
The only way forward for an environmentally abundant Australia is to recognise the humanity we all possess and to begin nurturing together.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been caring for Country for thousands of generations. These ancient and enduring cultures have always seen humans as part of the land, not separate. Intricate cultural systems enshrine the now widely-understood belief that our wellbeing is deeply interconnected with all living beings, including sky, land and water.

Birri Gubba and Kungalu, Murri woman, Teila Watson points out that Indigenous knowledge systems don’t suffer from the destructive logic of colonialism and can help solve the problems of climate change. On the other side of the world, Canadian lawmakers have reached similar conclusions, recognising that seeing nature through an Indigenous ‘lens’ can help us improve environmental decision-making. That’s why, if we, collectively, want to find our way back to cultures that put Earth at the centre, Indigenous peoples, voices, ideas and ways need to be at the forefront.
At the same time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across this continent will be (and already are) some of the first and worst hit by the climate crisis. Unsurprisingly, being on the frontline means they’re also often best placed and most likely to resist destructive projects. As Julian Brave NoiseCat, an enrolled member of the Canim Lake Band Tsq’escen, British Columbia, says, “in the fight for climate justice, indigenous people set the path – and lead the way.”

Yorta Yorta musician Neil Morris agrees, saying the revolution can’t happen without First Nations justice, something our music industry is powerfully poised to lead. To do that, we need to move beyond tokenism. So below are some suggestions for non-Indigenous musicians, to help you do just that. The content in this section has either been shared or written by First Nations people. Green Music Australia believes strongly in a future led by First Peoples and we’d love to hear any suggestions from First Nations readers as we continue this work. Please contact info@greenmusic.com.au.

Of course, we can’t cover everything in a guide like this. At the end of the day, each of us needs to take the care and time to do it for ourselves, and with our communities. Below we offer some starting points, advice, and suggested paths to travel down. There’s loads here. It’s a lifetime’s work and the time to begin was yesterday. Let’s go.
Pay the Rent to Traditional Owners

We’re living on stolen land. More and more people are Paying the Rent to Traditional Owners by making a regular donation of income (or ticketing profits) to a body led by First Nations Elders. It’s a step up from Acknowledgement and is a tangible transfer of power. This great article and this list of FAQs explain how it works.

Victorian musos can set up a regular payment via Pay the Rent. For those elsewhere, use this guide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander charities, the links in Shannan Dodson’s article above, or the #paytherent links in this anti-racism resource to choose a group that’s genuinely controlled by the community, without government interference. If you’re unsure, consider supporting First Nations environmental activists like SEED Indigenous Youth Climate Network.

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 acknowledge it publicly – in email signatures, letters (Australia Post lets you include Traditional Place names on mail), websites, and at events. Beyond Acknowledgements, we must connect more deeply with the places we live and work – as Wiradjuri man Richard Swain says, “The Country’s crying out for people to listen to it”. This means slowing down, smelling the eucalypts and paying attention to seasonal changes. The aim is to build real relationships with place, with the rivers and creeks, trees and creatures that are our living kin. That’s what life is about. Over time, our connection to Country will inform everything we do, deepening our Acknowledgements (see the case study below for what that looks like) and our actions, and ensuring we tread lightly when going about our lives.

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 advocate for First Nations musicians, sharing work, offering headline billing, stage time and support slots. We’ve got a brilliant list of First Nations music, radio and media on our website. Use it to find your new favourite artist or news source to amplify.

Be an Ally, Advocate and Accomplice

It’s not just about what we do, but also how we do it. Here are some tips from Rhoda Roberts, for non-Indigenous allies who want to centre First Nations people, ideas, worldviews and approaches in our movement towards environmental healing and justice.

“As human beings we’re all passing through this place. While we’re here, we must be aware and open – always learning. There are no mistakes, only lessons. We’ll never learn it all but a few tips can be helpful. So here are some from me. And remember, every one’s community requirements are different.”

– Rhoda Roberts AO
Assume there’s plenty you don’t know: Learning and healing are interwoven. A little humility goes a long way. So start by assuming there’s lots you’re not aware of. That’s ok. In fact, it’s an outcome of Australia’s cultural amnesia – our history of silencing and discrimination.

Don’t take yourself too seriously: Not everything needs to be worthy and serious. We’re ever-adapting and can have a laugh when we see the irony of our shared histories. Satire and parody are strategies of resistance. They humanise us all. And if you are not sure if it’s ok to laugh, just ask.

Don’t lump everyone together: Like all sectors of the community, First Peoples are diverse culturally, have varying social and political opinions, histories and relationships. While large sectors of our community live below the poverty line, we also have millionaires. They all still belong to community – so, it’s not one-size-fits-all.

Be patient: For broader Australian society, having the robust conversations we need to have will be challenging. The dialogue will be uncomfortable as we grow and trust is built. It’s about listening, and understanding that there is another narrative to the history that has not been told. And it will take time.

Allow time for cultural observances: Allow ample lead times when working in collaboration. First Nations artists carry cultural and community obligations, especially when dealing with new work relating to specific cultural importance and age-old knowledge. When a meeting is cancelled it could be for a variety of reasons such a ceremony and/or Sorry Business.

Respect self-determination and create safety: Our protocols and stewardship dictate that we honour our sky, land and water ancestors, the gifts of the land we are on, and the peoples of that Country who have continued ancient obligations in the face of many challenges, be they colonisation, the climate crisis and/or government policy. In this context, your patience, advocacy, understanding and flexibility when collaborating helps ensure that self-determination is respected, and continued connections are safeguarded.

Consult with care: Whether based in urban, regional, rural or remote communities, our custodians carry responsibilities for the traditional stories, song, dance and language of Country – so continuing creative practices have broader implications. Nobody knows everything or everyone, so ensuring the right people, sectors of the community, and even genders (when dealing with Women and or Men’s Business) is essential.

Don’t jump into silences: Give it time and people will talk in their own way. In a meeting, blackfellas are aware of the kinship structure in the room, who needs to talk first, when you can ask questions and how much is given in the first connection.

Two-way side-by-side: Ensure an equality of voice when developing new collaborative work. The truth is, we all need each other. So avoid ‘us’ and ‘them’. This centres you and makes someone else the ‘other’. Collaboration and cultural teaching is all about two-way side-by-side – Indigenous to non-indigenous and non-indigenous to Indigenous, old to young and young to old – it’s how transfer of knowledge and generational exchange happens.

Accept that some tasks aren’t for you: Decolonising material, for instance, should be written by First Nations people. Non-indigenous people are observers of, and participants in, colonisation. They haven’t experienced certain structural and systemic behaviour that will be common for First Nations peoples, and they will often have personally benefited from colonisation. The lived First Nations experience shifts the mindset.
Give credit appropriately and generously: Australia does not yet have a law that prevents alteration, distortion or misuse of traditional symbols, songs, dances, performances and story that may be part of the heritage of particular First Nations language groups.

Pay people properly: Your budget needs to include compensation for expertise and research, community consultation and guidance. Have a process of developing a financial relationship alongside a personal commitment for cultural safety and knowledge holding.

Treat relationships with care and respect: Time is always put aside for visitors. Ensure the approach is one of visiting a loved one – take a gift of food – as you would to your grandma (it’s not charity). Baking bread is symbolic. Many poorer communities, for example, can’t afford fresh produce. In those cases, a bag of fresh fruit would be very much appreciated.

Have a go: When seeking connection and communication, you don’t have to get it perfect. Some communities might not have a reference point regarding your project. But don’t underestimate people’s knowledge. Instead, give a truthful and open pitch that enables tough questions to be asked.

Mentor and share knowledge: Be aware of varied cultural differences and capacity. It’s two-way learning – when you work with a community you receive knowledge and awareness and, in return, they receive your expertise and skills.

Be committed and genuine: If you believe in equality and diversity, ask yourself the simple questions that deepen your efforts: How am I engaging? Who on my team is from a First Nations background and/or is a person of colour? Where is the venue and who are the local mob? Do I know how to say hello and farewell to audiences in the local language?

One-on-one experience: Have you spent time connecting with Country? Book your next weekend or holiday with an Aboriginal operated cultural tourism experience using the only Aboriginal-led national booking agent, ‘Welcome to Country’.

Don’t assume: Don’t assume just because someone is First Nations, they’ll necessarily be an environmental expert. While First Nations folks may be connected to ancient teachings and cultures with valuable perspective and potential for access to important knowledge, being First Nations doesn’t magically confer knowledge in this area. Many people have been disconnected from traditional lands through Government removal policies over generations. For those and other reasons, many may not know elements of ceremony and culture, including language, or have appropriate cultural permissions, seniority or experience to share knowledge relating to culture and Country. The truth is, we’re collectively working through such big stuff. And everyone has their part to play. Part of yours is to create space and work to empower others, while not bringing unrealistic assumptions or expectations to the table.

For more, click here to check out our additional resources on the subject, get educated and get active.
**Improve your Cultural Competency**

Beyond these tips, there’s loads of ways to improve your cultural competency. Along with self-directed research, being willing to listen and learn are powerful assets to carry with you. You can also do training:

- **Cultural Awareness workshop:** Richard J. Frankland MA delivers insightful and entertaining creative sector cultural awareness workshops. A proud Gunditjmara man, Richard is one of Australia’s most experienced Aboriginal singer/songwriters and authors, and has written, directed and produced films and theatre.

- **YARN Australia Cultural Competency training and mentoring:** YARN teaches how to respectfully work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities through Cultural Competency Workshops and Mentoring.

- **Generate // Working in First Nations Cultural Contexts (FCAC):** This Footscray Community Arts workshop helps non-Indigenous folks to better support sovereignty and self-determined outcomes in First Nations arts, culture, education and community-engaged practice.

- **Black Card Cultural Capability Training:** This training is best for corporate organisations, businesses and governance so might be good to recommend to the organisations you work with.

**Learn our History**

Now that we’re adults, it’s time to take responsibility for learning the important things we weren’t taught in school. There are so many possible entry points, from books to films, from online sources to formal courses. Here’s just a few accessible resources to get you on your way.

- **First Australians (SBS):** This series chronicles the birth of contemporary ‘Australia’ from the perspective of its first people.

- **’The Killing Times’ (The Guardian):** The colonisation of Australia was brutal and bloody, but many stories of the frontier have been hidden or denied. This special series tells some of them and asks, are we ready for truth-telling?

- **Common Ground:** Founder Rona Glynn McDonald, a proud Kaytetye woman, established the Common Ground website to celebrate First Nations knowledge, cultures and stories of our true history.

- **You Can’t Ask That: Indigenous (ABC):** For some basic questions answered by a diverse group of Indigenous folks.

With any of this work, consider forming a group of allies to learn together. It’s better you don’t do this work alone and we’ve all got a responsibility to support others as we go. You could form a Decolonising Solidarity book club or get a reading group together for any of the suggested readings above.
As you learn and explore, you’ll deepen understanding and relationships and find yourself capable of more meaningful action. Below, as an example, we’ve looked at how the ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ can be delivered at different levels of personalisation and meaning. 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. What if, at our shows, instead of just a basic Acknowledgment, we practiced ‘Calling Country’ with Traditional Custodians? Read on, to see what that might look like.

First Steps
One step we can all take is to make an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of our shows. Check out this map to see whose land you’re on. 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.

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.

Next Level
Make your Acknowledgement more personal. While an Acknowledgement is an important thing to do, it can be considered tokenistic when it is the same dialogue repeated. Showing a deeper understanding of the region and the connections of country, culture and community will help shape new perspectives.

Some suggestions:
• Think about any special landscape features of the Country you’re on – forests, rivers, mountains or the coast. Reflect on what that Country means to you. Or, even better, consider what the idea of Traditional Custodians ‘past and present’ means to you as a non-Indigenous person. Add that reflection to the statement above.

• Find out the nation’s totem and include it in the acknowledgement. For example: “We honour the Bundjalung peoples of the Widjabul clan and their custodial territories from the Logan River in the north, the Condamine in the west and the Clarence river in the south. They are the caretakers of the Hoop Pine, known as Goanna peoples, whose land we work on and we pay our respects as they continue, as always, the stewardship and cultural maintenance of country.”

• Another option is to have a local Traditional Owner / Traditional Custodian do a Welcome to Country. To arrange a Welcome to Country, find the Traditional Owners yourself or ask the closest National Indigenous Australians Agency office.
Deeper Levels
Calling Country. A welcome does not have to be just spoken. For music events, ‘Calling Country’ through a call and response song is one possible way of giving a deeper, and even more culturally-appropriate welcome.

Some background:
• For thousands of years music, song and dance heard across Australia was 100% Aboriginal, with participants and families undertaking travel across vast distances through clan borders and across nations. There were systems of respect in place for entering other lands.
• In the ancient ways, when clans would arrive on neighbouring land, the visitors would ‘call out’ to announce themselves. In return, the custodian of that Country would ‘call out’ in response, inviting them to cross into their territories. For some regions a smoking ceremony would be performed. In other areas decorative body painting indicated the type of ceremony being performed – from sweeping, cleansing and welcoming, to sweat transference. Visiting groups were entrusted with information about the country they were on, and ensured safe passage.

A suggestion: Calling Country
From the above background, you can see why simply making an acknowledgement or even having an elder do a welcome is not the deepest way you can respect Traditional Owners and Custodians. Imagine, instead, organising a call and response welcome from the clan whose land you are on, with the members of your band or crew calling to enter and a response from the local custodians, welcoming you in front of the audience. Think of the calling as a question, the response as an invitation and your music as a gift. And be creative with how you do it.

This creative and meaningful idea is a suggestion of what’s possible when we understand the history and engage with local people and treat these practices as real opportunities for relationship and trust-building.

“Music connects people to place, culture, strength, pride and traverses geography. Every person’s voice is important. When we engage with music, we engage with culture and we all engage in healing, we hear the laughter and the joy for our better tomorrow.”
– Dr. Shellie Morris
Speaking Up

Our cultural influence as musicians is our most powerful force, and one we must use for good.

We need to green our own act for many reasons – it’s the right thing to do, it feels good, it’s what our fans expect and it better aligns us with the forces of life on Country. But we are not individuals. We’re profoundly connected to each other and to land, water and sky. And we’re not simply powerless ‘consumers’ of culture; we are living, breathing creators of it, with potential to shift the way our society feels, thinks and acts. You’ve got fans who look to you, so what you say, do and sing about matters. Competing stories of ecological crisis and a hopeful future are told by each of us in a thousand ways each day. What stories are you telling?

“When you’ve got art you’ve got voice. And when you’ve got voice you’ve got freedom, and with freedom comes responsibility.”

– Richard Frankland, Gunditjmara filmmaker, musician and activist
Be a role model

Probably the most beneficial action you can take to care for our planet is modelling your care and commitment and getting others involved. Whether you realise it or not, you are a cultural role model. Let your fans, the industry, media and government know how you feel about the climate emergency and the extinction crisis. Let them know what's special to you about the Country you were born on and the places you live amongst and love now. Behaviour change research tells us that positive reinforcement and inspiration tend to work better than shaming. But sometimes things need to be called out, too. You'll be the best judge of the right tone for your community.

“There is nowhere else I would rather play. The next generation are demanding a rapid shift to renewables, a just transition for all workers and for the government to stop investing in coal. The young people of Australia made it clear the future they want, which relies on rapid action in the present.”

– Jack River
Case Study: Listening to Climate Action – Jack River’s We Are the Youth

Social causes need anthems to carry them, and there’s a special place for Jack River’s 2021 single We Are the Youth. The song draws inspiration from the 2019 September School Strike 4 Climate rally in Sydney. River explains, “I played to 80,000 young people, and I realised that I didn’t have an anthem for them, and myself, to express how we felt about the times.”

The song was released alongside a powerful music video directed by Nyikina Warrwa and Wangkumara Barkindji filmmaker Marlikka Perdrisat that included media coverage of natural disasters and impotent political leaders contrasted with the energetic worldwide climate rallies.

With lyrics like, “We’re gonna run through the streets tonight, we’re gonna run to the riot, we are the youth,” the song creatively articulates the anger, frustration, and disappointment of those working to solve the climate crisis, and also offers a place of safety and collective hope for the future. It’s a brilliant example of an artist using their stage to call for action.
What it Looks Like

1. Talk about current issues

Use your platform to talk about current issues and events, or to challenge existing cultural ideas – like the fact that we are somehow separate from nature. Share the ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups are showing leadership, and boost the voices and needs of their communities, artists and activists, whether it be a local issue or something big like a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament.

It may sound simple, but it helps to make it normal for the rest of us to talk about it, especially for those who look up to you. As you go, try to be inclusive and consider the needs of the most vulnerable in our community.

2. Share action ideas

Talking about issues is great, but taking action is even better. Use your platform to lead by example. Talk about what you’re doing and encourage your audience to join in. The changes you make will be amplified a thousand fold if you bring others along for the ride.

There are plenty of resources in this guide. Consider sharing your favourites with fans. Start an online conversation about food waste, fast fashion, transport emissions and energy usage, about what you’re learning about First Nations leadership in healing Country, or about organisations and movements that are working to directly solve those problems. Make sure you always bring it back to the collective, the systemic – because the challenges we face are not ones that ‘green consumption’ or individual choices can fix. We need people to join together and exercise their democratic power. You can inspire them to do that.

When you lead by example you not only influence your fans, but your peers too.

3. Talk with venues and suppliers

Imagine if every conversation included green ideas. Imagine this was normal and leaving it out felt weird. That’s where we want to get to. So speak to venues, suppliers and service providers. Ask how you can help them make your show, event or product as green as possible. Ask what their sustainability policy is or what actions they’re taking. Tell them you want to promote this stuff to your fans. Tell them what you’re after, or simply ask “How could we make this greener than usual?” Encourage your team to ask these questions, too. Our Green Venue Checklist can help you on your way.
4. Celebrate green fans and venues

Give a shout out to those who bring their own water bottles to shows or who use greener travel (see our transport section for more on that). Ask your followers to share what they’re doing or the places and issues they care about. What we pay attention to grows. So help draw attention to the good stuff in the world, and the stuff that matters most. Was the venue welcoming of sustainability measures? Let the audience know. Do they have an awesome recycling/composting system, invest in renewable energy, or do great work in the community? Mention it.

5. Get political

One of the most valuable things you can contribute is your presence at protests and events and your music to the movement. Some ways you can use your cultural power:

• Add your voice to change: sign petitions like the Music Climate Declaration, go to rallies, and share them with your fans.
• Go to peaceful protests and civil disobedience actions when you can. And share them with your fans.
• Contribute your music to a cause by performing at a protest rally or community event or using it as the soundtrack to a documentary or film on a topic you care about.

6. Be a role model of caring for Country

Link up with local regeneration projects, tree plantings, beach clean ups when you’re in town. Tim Minchin’s Greening page has a great list of active local groups to connect with across Australia and Aotearoa. And make it visible, letting your fans know what you’re doing and why.

7. Tell the right story

The problems we face are hundreds, if not thousands of years in the making. They are rooted in the story we tell ourselves about being separate from, rather than belonging to, Country. Consider how your work reinforces or counters that story.

Musicians are generational storytellers - with the ability to connect with audiences at a deep visceral level. That’s a cultural influence other leaders can only dream of. Make the link between ecology and humanity and help the dominant culture let go of the need to perpetually exploit, compete and divide.
Case Study: No Music On A Dead Planet

In 2022, Green Music Australia brought popular artists, record labels, festivals and venues together in a united call ahead of the federal election to implore fans to ‘vote for the planet’. Working in partnership with Music Declares Emergency, we galvanised the music community to advocate for strong climate action and created change at the ballot box and beyond.

Key achievements of the campaign included:

- **Over 150 artists** donned campaign tees, shared #nomusiconadeadplanet messages and signed Green Music Australia’s Climate Declaration.
- **7.4 MILLION fans were reached through artist social media channels**, including those of global phenomenon Tame Impala, Aussie rock legends Jimmy Barnes and Rob Hirst of Midnight Oil, musical storytellers DRMNGNOW and NIDALA, classical and jazz heavyweights Deborah Cheetham AO and Andrea Keller, and industry mainstays Ella Hooper, Alex The Astronaut and Something For Kate.
- **The campaign received widespread media coverage**, including features on The Today Show, ABC News Breakfast, Phine 7, Guardian Australia, the Herald Sun, Daily Telegraph and Rolling Stone.
- **Performers advocated for climate action on some of the biggest stages across Australia**, from Bluesfest Byron Bay and Groovin the Moo to Tamworth Country Music Festival and WOMADELAIDE – reaching over 260,000 people.
- We helped force climate change onto the political agenda. **The 2022 Australian Federal Election was declared “the climate election”**, with Australians highlighting the climate crises as their key concern when voting.

Photo: @Mark Francesca for AMNPLIFY
Case Study: Bluesfest x Stop Adani

Green Music Australia worked closely with Bluesfest – Australia’s Premier Contemporary Blues and Roots Festival – and 11 performing artists, to bring a strong Stop Adani presence to the festival. Most notably, our strengthened relationship with John Butler and his amazing team helped to deliver a fantastic finale.

Highlights included:

- “Coral not Coal” protest banner revealed on John Butler’s main stage performance in front of a 19,000 strong crowd, featuring a speech from Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council member, Adrian Burragubba, and on-stage support from several other Bluesfest artists.
- Interviews, videos and stills were captured and shared (and re-shared) on event and artist socials throughout the three-day period, reaching over 100,000 people.
When speaking out about the natural world, consider the words and phrases The Guardian and journalist George Monbiot use (and which ones they avoid). Click the links to find out why ‘climate crisis’ is better than ‘climate change’, and ‘living systems’ is better than ‘natural resources’. As Monbiot says, we need to “talk about the living world with words that engage people, reveal rather than disguise realities, and honour what we seek to protect”.

8. Consider your content

If it feels creatively true for you, consider the content of your music and explore ways to write to the truth of our times, whatever that is for you. There’s no limit to the ways that can be done. To prove that point, we’ve pulled together an epic playlist of ‘Green Music’ for inspiration. It’s chock full of new and old music, with all genres from hip hop and folk to ambient, metal, reggae, pop, country, soul and everything in between. Now, it’s all over the place (which is why we’ve also curated a bunch of themed playlists) but that diversity is kind of the point: there are as many ways to respond or integrate this stuff into your work as there are artists in the world. So dig in and explore. Go to your favourite spot, listen to see what sounds Country is calling for, and then chart your own creative path.

9. Support change

Support organisations creating change and encourage your fans to do the same.

To support Green Music Australia (for example!) get involved with our work, join as a volunteer, or donate to us through platforms like Plus1 or via our website.

There are so many groups doing wonderful work:

- Protect Country from the fossil fuel industry with Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network, Stop Adani, Frontline Action on Coal, Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, Friends of the Earth, and Extinction Rebellion.
- Encourage divestment from planet wrecking fossil fuels with Market Forces.
- Campaign for change policies and laws like binding climate and biodiversity targets, renewable energy targets, a price on carbon with groups like School Strike 4 Climate, Australian Youth Climate Coalition, and the Australian Conservation Foundation.
- Recognise legal rights and responsibilities including rights for nature and animals, responsibilities to children and future generations with campaigns from the Australian Earth Laws Alliance, Sea Shepherd or the Environmental Defenders Office.

“Music is so powerful in movements because when we sing together, we literally get on the same vibration. It’s a physical thing. It’s like an audio hug, or holding each other's hands, or putting a hand on your shoulder in support. In that way, music is exactly what we need.”

– Lu Aya, Peace Poets
Case Study: Gretta Ray

At the end of 2019, singer-songwriter Gretta Ray released her song ‘Heal You In Time’, written as her love letter to our Earth. Gretta is generously donating all profits from the song and her sale of eco-friendly merch to Green Music Australia.

“Climate change is the biggest challenge we have ever faced. The Earth and the natural systems that protect us all are at breaking point, we all need to do our part to collectively change.”

– Parkway Drive

‘Heal You In Time’ cover art

Photo: Artist

“Climate change is the biggest challenge we have ever faced. The Earth and the natural systems that protect us all are at breaking point, we all need to do our part to collectively change.”

– Parkway Drive

Photo: Artist

Ben Gordon - Parkway Drive #BYOBottle, USA. Photo: Artist
Office and Studio

For many musicians, our home offices and studios are where we spend most of our time, making music and taking care of business. So it makes sense to put some effort into greening those spaces. Here’s a list of actions you can take today to make your workspaces lovely, clean and green.

Green your energy use:

- Draught proof your windows and doors. For a small investment, you’ll be surprised how much difference it makes.
- Turn lights off when spaces are not in use.
- Turn off printers, speakers, and other devices when not in use.
- 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 space.
- Replace older light bulbs with LEDs. They’re far more efficient.
- Switch your computer’s energy-saving settings on and shut down at end of day.
- Switch to a green electricity provider and buy GreenPower™ (see Green Your Power below).
- Invest in solar panels. But do the above steps first to reduce the amount of power you need to generate with your panels.
Print green

- Avoid unnecessary printing.
- 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.

Green your space

- Get plants! Plants are rad. They help our mental and physical health, cleaning the air and increasing oxygen flow.
- Use non-toxic cleaning products.
- Buy vintage or op-shop furniture.

Green your waste

- Follow the waste hierarchy:
  1. Reduce
  2. Reuse
  3. Recycle
  4. Dispose.
- And if you do have to recycle, make sure you do it right by speaking to your council or using Planet Ark’s excellent Recycling Near You site.
- Set up a composting system in your kitchen.
  See the Waste chapter for more links and ideas.

Eat green

- Use reusable packaging and implements: including mugs, water bottles, napkins and silverware that can be washed and used again.
- Eat locally grown organic food and drinks for your health and for the health of Country where it’s produced, and the people who produce it.
  See the Food chapter for more links and ideas.

Centre First Nations leadership

- See the list on Decolonising Solidarity for actions from different levels of Acknowledgements (ranging from displaying building plaques and flying the Aboriginal flag to paying the rent, marking important dates, making public commitments, creating economic opportunities and more).
  See the First Nations First chapter for more links and ideas.
Make it social

- To power-up your impact, talk to others you work with (bandmates, record label, agent, label, publicist, venues) and share your enthusiasm, your practices, and your learnings to bring them on board.
- Likewise, when you bring new partners, booking agents, publishers and more on board, ask them what their environmental or sustainability policy is. This is a great way to get the conversation spreading through the industry. Imagine the ripple effect if we ALL took that simple step and asked!

And here are a few other things to consider...

Green Your Power

The electricity sector is the largest source of greenhouse emissions in Australia, with about 80% still coming from coal and gas. That’s slowly changing, with more rooftop solar coming online. But we need to use our influence as consumers and apply pressure as citizens if we want a renewable future faster.

Take Action

1. Go with a green electricity provider. CoPower, Amber and Enova are all great. To gauge how green your current supplier is, see the Green Electricity Guide.
2. Whichever supplier you are currently with, immediately switch to 100% renewable electricity by buying GreenPower™ – it may cost a touch more each month, but it won’t cost the Earth. And that’s the point.

Move Your Money

At the end of the day, 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. If we want to stop mines like Adani, we have to cut off their supply of cash. And that’s an area where we all have influence.

Market Forces believes that the institutions looking after our money should use it to protect, not damage, our environment. They expose the institutions that are financing environmentally destructive projects and help Australians hold these institutions accountable. You can use the guides on their website to help you make the switch.

Take Action

Head to the Market Forces website, find a greener bank that doesn’t invest in fossil fuels. Once you’ve done that, check your insurance provider and super fund, too.

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 three great options:

Partner with Plus1 - a platform created by musicians for musicians - to commit $1 from every concert or event ticket sold to your favourite environmental group, like Green Music Australia.

Partner with FEAT. Live’s Solar Slice program to implement a 1.5% ticketing surcharge that will fund crucial carbon reduction measures for the live music and entertainment sector.

Work with non-profit ticketing providers like Humanitix, who put their profits towards sustainable projects, such as literacy programs for young women.
Green Your Music Release

Over time, we’ve seen a general shift away from physical music formats in favour of digital download and streaming services. On the surface, this shift feels clean, efficient and waste free. But is it green?

The Short Version

All forms of music listening have environmental impacts. But digital downloads are basically the greenest way to share and enjoy music. So we suggest you preference online formats, and encourage fans to download rather than stream. Physical formats are better for people who will listen to your music a lot. Then use your influence to push our culture and decision-makers towards renewable sources of power as fast as possible. That’ll make streaming and downloading greener in the future.

The Longer Version

The reality is that there’s no such thing as ‘perfect’. All forms of music listening have environmental impacts. But a little knowledge can help you make better decisions.

Physical products: You can’t make a CD or press vinyl without exploiting the land and creating toxic byproducts that affect waterways and those who depend on them. Vinyl is made from PVC (a nasty plastic) and CDs are made from plastics and metal. Both use energy and materials in their production, packaging and distribution, are hard to recycle and won’t biodegrade. If you’re going to use vinyl, find a supplier who’ll make the whole process as green as possible (like these folks).

Streamed music: Streaming requires energy production for data storage and transmission as described in the ‘internet’ section above. To compare, it’s estimated the energy associated with one CD is equivalent to about 27 streams of an album. That means, if you’re going to listen to something fewer times, streaming is a better option than physical, but for really big listeners (more than 27 times through an album) physical copies are better. But downloading is even better still.

Downloaded music: Digital downloads are the greenest way to share and enjoy music - especially for those albums or songs you’ll listen to on repeat. It reduces the need for sending information back and forth online, with data and transmission impacts happening just once. Thankfully, you can download music onto your device from most streaming platforms. Fans should get in the habit of downloading albums and songs, especially those they listen to multiple times. You can help encourage them to do that.

The Upshot

Do these four things and you’re helping us all get on the road to greener listening:

1. Move your music mostly online emphasising download over streaming for your fans.
2. Make a limited run of physical copies for those who will spin your music dozens of times. And do it in the greenest way possible – with sustainable packaging (minimal materials and recycled cardboard, rather than plastic) and no excess items or materials.
3. Use your platform to call for more progressive renewable energy targets and policies that help incentivise change, so the internet your music is streaming on is powered sustainably.
4. Communicate with fans letting them know how to do their part in creating change.

Use the Internet Mindfully

The internet has an enormous environmental footprint. There, we said it. While it’s invisible to us as we surf, meet or share, the reality is that all that data needs to be processed and stored somewhere. That’s why the world has millions of data centres – picture enormous banks of powerful computers in climate-controlled rooms that draw immense amounts of power – reportedly responsible for about 2% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions, nearly equal to the airline industry.
And our online lives are becoming ever more data hungry. Think about the ways your internet experience has changed in the last few years: more images and video, more music and TV streaming, faster speeds, larger files, more impressive experiences. All of this takes data, which requires energy. While some of the energy demand of increasing internet traffic is offset by improvements in efficiency, the upshot is that it’s an epic, and growing, area of climate concern.

So what do we do? Most modern music careers wouldn’t be viable without the internet – it’s how we connect, share and sell our craft. We’re not suggesting you go offline. Instead, we recommend the same basic approach as in every section of this guide:

- Make greener choices (because what you do matters).
- Use your cultural power to push for change (because these issues are systemic).

**Digital Technology**

The legends over at Julie’s Bicycle (a UK-based sustainable arts advocate) have put together this great briefing that aims to help the cultural community (that’s you!) to make sense of environmental sustainability in the digital sphere. It’s a good starting point.

**Communication and Social Media**

You’ll want to use the internet to share your music and communicate with your fans, including about your greening efforts. To make that greener, ideally we’ll all find creative ways to share smaller files, less frequently. Low-Tech Magazine’s blog offers us one radical example of what that could look like. Through a kind of online minimalism, they simplify fonts, avoid video, reduce the range of colours and the size of images used to bring the size of the site and the amount it needs to communicate with other sites and servers down. And it’s even hosted on their own solar-powered server, which goes offline if there’s too much cloudy weather! Even if you don’t want to go that far, you can learn a lot by reading what they’ve done and how. Reducing our energy demands like this, though, is actually just one side of the ‘greener choices’ coin. The other side is making the energy we do use as green as possible.

If you’re arranging hosting for your own website, get one hosted on a server powered with renewable energy. Most of the big cloud service providers have committed to 100% renewable energy or carbon neutral targets, such as Google Cloud, Apple iCloud and Microsoft Azure - though these are often achieved with offsets, so reducing your demand on them is the best first step. Store things locally on your device where you can. If you’re storing things on a server or online, go through periodically and delete files you no longer need.

This is a tricky space, so don’t aim for perfection. Also, sometimes doing things online is the greenest option. COVID-19 has shown us all what’s possible on the web, from online gigs, to interviews and music collabs with other artists. If you can use the internet to avoid a flight or minimise significant other emissions, go for it. It’s quite possible the ideal model in future will be a hybrid of online and in-person gatherings to help us reduce emissions while still reaching remote communities and fans in all corners of the globe.

**Stay Informed**

We recommend following quality independent news sources, always.

Choose articles and information published by credible and independent organisations, such as Bureau of Meteorology (AUS), NASA (US), The Royal Society (UK), ABC, Climate Council, the Union of Concerned Scientists and The Potsdam Institute. These are better than opinion pieces, blogs, forums, and websites like Wikipedia (which are ok as a starting point but should not be relied on). And definitely don’t form your opinion based on what you read on social media.

If you’re unsure about something, don’t be afraid to contact us. We’re here to support you. It’s literally our job!

**Self-Care**

Remember to always put your mental health first and take breaks when you need them. Nobody is a perfect advocate for the living planet, and the music industry can be a challenging place to
Cryptocurrencies and NFTs

There’s loads of hype about NFTs. In 2021, musical artist Grimes sold several videos for $6 million. She did it using NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens), which are basically a way of proving unique ownership of digital content so it can be bought and sold. Will they have a big impact on our lives? Time will tell. But for now, there’s enough interest – and confusion – for us to share some advice here about their (notable) environmental impacts.

Environmentally, right now, most NFTs look pretty bad. Just like cryptocurrencies (such as Bitcoin) NFTs verify transactions on the blockchain (like an electronic record book) with the use of massive networks of computers, solving a cryptographic puzzle via a process called ‘Proof of Work’. As the name suggests, it requires extreme amounts of computer processing work which chews up loads and loads of energy.

Given the state of our planet, Proof of Work should probably be illegal. Indeed, some artists are refusing to engage on that basis. Even if you green a process like this with renewable energy (or offsets), you’re still massively ramping up the amount of energy our society needs, making the transition to a greener future much harder for all of us. Not good.

Thankfully, there’s some hope. Some NFT platforms are switching to a greener method: ‘Proof of Stake’. And there’s even an Aussie music start up using that method to produce NFTs with, it claims, 1/44,000th of the energy use. If you make one decision in this space, make sure the blockchain your trades are registered on uses Proof of Stake.

And if you do monetise your work with NFTs, think carefully about what you offer along with the digital ‘product’. For now, artists often share a bundle attached to an NFT, which might be made up of a unique image, for instance, plus a collection of stuff. Some tech experts suggest the power of NFTs is not so much about the digital asset itself, but about the connections and relationships you’re building via this bundle. The greenest way to do that is to focus on bundling experiences (a ticket to every future show in their hometown, a personal video call, a house concert when you’re in their region, an invite to join you at a political rally, or some other form of access to you and your broader community) rather than a bunch of unethical or impractical physical products.

We shape the world with the choices we make. And artists shape people’s sense of what is normal by what we put out there. Consider the necessity of involving yourself with energy-intensive NFTs at all. And if you do decide to engage, go as green as you can and avoid materialism at all costs.

For more on the topic, see these articles via The Guardian, Medium and The Atlantic. And check out Clean NFTs to stay up to date in this fast-moving space.

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.

Connecting with the wider living world

The benefits of connecting to Country can be profound. Spending time with Mother Earth and caring for her are both healing acts. From Common Ground: “The warmth of the sun kissing your skin. The feeling of salt in your eyebrows after a swim in the ocean. The support of soil beneath your feet – grounding you with every step. The sound of rain after dry season – nature’s music. These are feelings felt by us all. We can all find beauty and inspiration in the natural world.”

Connecting with and care for self

Through regular meditation, we can learn that acceptance, gratitude and compassion are antidotes to denial, anger and fear. And that these things aren’t just ideas, but states of being that we can experience, strengthen, and draw on when we need them. Yoga and exercise help, too. As does time off technology, consistent routines, listening to relaxing music, and good sleep. Find a class or a teacher or an amazing free app and dive in.
Connecting with community and taking action

None of us needs to do this work alone. It’s harder and less fun that way. And sometimes it’s good to switch off and just enjoy each other’s company.

Seeking support

If you feel overwhelmed, reach out for professional psychological support. This great article by Australian Music Manager Charlotte Abroms is a good place to start for thinking about general music industry self-care. The Australian Psychological Society offers detailed guidance on coping with ecological distress, building on many of the points above. And there are many caring people and organisations you can call if you (or anyone you know) needs urgent support. In fact, Support Act delivers crisis relief and mental health and wellbeing services especially for Australian artists like you (plus crew and music workers, too). They offer a First Nations Dedicated Support Line that facilitates a culturally safe experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, crew and music workers. And they also develop and implement mental health prevention, education and training programs.

Contact Support Act

• General Support Line: 1800 959 500 (24/7)
• First Nations Dedicated Support Line 1800 861 085 (24/7)
• Email: support@supportact.org.au
• Post: PO Box 2190, Clovelly NSW 2031 Australia.

What else?

These are all good actions that align our lives better with the needs of Country. But as environmental activist Bill McKibben says, “the most important thing an individual can do, is be less of an individual”. Systemic and collective change is what’s needed if we’re to avert climate catastrophe. So while we’re improving our personal footprint, we also need to push for collective, political change. That’s why your voice is the most powerful tool you’ve got. See Speaking Up for our suggestions on how to use it well. Or get in touch if you want to get more involved in the Green Music movement.

“Health is about so much more than simply not being sick. It’s about getting a balance between physical, mental, emotional, cultural and spiritual health.”

– Dr Tamara Mackean (Waljen woman, Public Health Medicine Physician and Fellow of the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine)
“If it can’t be reduced, reused, repaired, rebuilt, refurbished, refinshed, resold, recycled or composted, then it should be restricted, redesigned or removed from production.”

– Pete Seeger

Every bit of plastic ever created still exists, and we humans move more materials around the globe than natural processes. These stunning facts come from a broken relationship with our living planet and from economic models based on limitless growth.

We’ve become used to throwing things away. In nature, there’s no such place as ‘away’, as everything is food for something else. Check out The Story of Stuff for a fast-paced, fact-filled look at the underside of our wasteful production and consumption patterns.

Instead of dealing with the mess, let’s avoid it in the first place by buying second-hand, repairing what we can, and, if those things aren’t possible, purchasing from ethical companies that use minimal packaging. And remember, for you as a musician, it’s not just the direct impacts you’re having, you’re also sending a message to all those fans watching you on stage and online. So what you do really matters.

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

1. **Reduce**: our best option is to reimagine and redesign to avoid creating waste in the first place.
2. **Reuse**: repair, rehome and refurbish products or parts wherever possible.
3. **Recycle**: where you have to dispose of something, turn it into raw materials for something else. This includes composting food waste to turn it into new soil.
4. **Dispose**: this final step is a last resort and should ensure safe disposal of toxins and hazards.
Case study: Jack Johnson

Legendary musician and environmentalist Jack Johnson joined forces with Green Music Australia for his 2017 Australia/New Zealand tour to implement green solutions. Working closely with seven live music venues, including the Sidney Myer Music Bowl and Sydney Opera House, Jack’s team successfully eliminated single-use plastic water bottles, beer cups and straws. As a GMA ambassador, Jack promoted BYOBottle encouraging fans to bring their own reusable water bottles and WE-Refill was contracted to provide water refill stations for fans. A Farm to Stage catering program encouraged venues to source from local farms, and the tour partnered with OZ Harvest and Kiwi Harvest for food drives and excess food donation. At each event, a ‘Village Green’ was set up to showcase 5-10 local environmental non-profits and drive fan engagement. As part of Jack’s All At Once social action community, partnerships were established with local non-profits including Tangaroa Blue, Surfrider, Sea Shepherd Australia and Sustainable Coastlines, to promote beach clean-ups and ticket giveaways in association with each show.

This example shows what’s possible with commitment and support, with artists, venues, management and fans working together. For more detail on this case study, see Jack’s 2017-18 Tour Impact Report.

Impact highlights from Jack’s world tour include:

1. Over 36,000 single-use plastic bottles were eliminated by providing free filtered drinking water at water refill stations.
2. More than 36,300 litres of recyclables and over 5186 litres of compostable food waste were collected at venues across the tour.
3. Over 100,000 Environmental Actions were taken by fans, including Capture Your Commitment pledges.
4. 226 local farms were supported by a Farm-to-Stage catering program.
5. Nearly 70,000 reusable stainless steel pint cups were sold or given to fans to reduce single-use plastic waste and incentivise green action, eliminating the need for 200,000 plastic cups.
6. The tour partnered with local bike organisations to host Bike Valets at 22 concerts with over 1100 cyclists riding to the shows.
7. Over 6.8 tonnes of carbon were offset through support of clean energy initiatives
8. Over $1.9 million was directed to 315 non-profit partners.

Speak with us if you’d like support to green your tour.
Actions to reduce waste

It’s striking to consider that a plastic water bottle needs three litres of water to be created and a quarter of a bottle of crude oil. Most water bottles are not recycled after use, so billions enter landfill sites and oceans every year. Every item we buy, from musical equipment, to posters, packaging, cables and leads, has a similar story. The more we consume, the more of our living systems are exploited and the more waste is produced. Recycling has been one ‘solution’, but it’s less effective than we like to imagine. Here are some ideas to help you find a better relationship with the stuff in your life:

1. **Buy pre-loved:** Consider used music gear before buying new. See second-hand places like Found Sound or the Swap Shop who sell in-person (Melbourne) and online, or search for second-hand music equipment shops in your town. And online second-hand websites like Gumtree, Facebook Marketplace and eBay can be a good source, too.

2. **BYOBottle:** Join the movement by making a [BYOBottle Artist Commitment](#). It’s a great way to help reduce plastic waste in the music industry and engage your team, your fans, and the venues, clubs and festivals you play at. Our staff picks for reusable water bottles are [Ocean Bottle](#), [Frank Green](#) and [EarthBottles](#).

Promote reusable water bottles and water refill stations at music events by using our [Green Hospitality Rider](#) when performing. Recommend venues look into brands like Elkay and Moda; festivals and events can enquire about services from Bettercup, We-Refill, and One.

“**I’m proud to support the BYOBottle campaign and encourage us all to bring reusable bottles to my gigs. Music is thirsty work, let’s do what we can to do it sustainably!”**

– Kasey Chambers

Kasey Chambers rocking her reusable bottle for Plastic Free July 2019. Photo: Artist
See more great BYOBottle resources, the Plastic Pollution Coalition’s plastic-free touring guide, and the RAW Foundation’s guide to plastic-free events.

3. **Food**: If you get catering, request real plates, glasses and utensils backstage or bring your own. Think metal lunch boxes and reusable cutlery, straws, cups and bowls. We love products by Green and Kind, Kappi and Ever Eco. You’ve got the power on your rider to reduce disposable plastics – all you have to do is ask. Use this downloadable hospitality rider as a basis for communicating with venues.

4. **Hygiene and cosmetics**: You can get biodegradable glitter, package-free makeup and beauty products, bamboo toothbrushes and reusable menstrual cups, underwear and pads (like options 1, 2 and 3). See even more detailed zero-waste guides at awesome websites like Trash Is For Tossers.

5. **Camping at festivals**: Take (and promote) our pledge to Party With The Planet, not against it. We’ve been trashing our festivals for far too long, but we can clean things up, fast. And make use of some of the brilliant green festival kits available, including Ekologi Store’s Zero Waste Festival Kit.

6. **Ethical suppliers**: There’s a huge ecosystem of businesses that support our music practice, from instrument makers to vehicle rentals. Many are taking great green strides while others lag behind. To help speed the transition, ask businesses about their green goals or, even better, only buy from those with a proven track record. Some of our favourites suppliers include Rock Posters (who can print on recycled paper using toxin-free dyes), Pikio Solar Speakers, B-Alternative, Lixo, Green My Plate and A Greener Festival who all specialise in environmental event services. For all things clothing and vinyl, check out the Fashion & Merch section.

7. **Recycle right**: If you do have to recycle…
   - Use Planet Ark’s excellent Recycling Near You to work out what to take where.
   - Keep a recycling bin on your tour bus or backstage.
   - Compost your food scraps and biodegradable products (here’s a handy guide).
   - Collect soft plastics (plastic that can be scrunched into a ball easily, like pasta packets) and drop at REDcycle bins at major supermarkets.

What else?

Of course, these kinds of individual actions are just the beginning. As the folks from The Story of Stuff say, “Over the past decades, many environmental and social change efforts have come to reflect the centrality of shopping in our culture, suggesting change can be made – or is even best made – through alterations in our individual consumption patterns. These efforts – buy Fair Trade or organic, use a reusable bag, screw in a LED lightbulb – are a great place to start, but they are a terrible place to stop. We know the issues we face are systemic. So we need to push for collective change.” That’s why your voice is the most powerful tool you’ve got. See Speaking Up for our suggestions on how to use it well. Or get in touch if you want to get more involved in the Green Music movement.
Case Study: In Hearts Wake

Australian heavy-metal band In Hearts Wake went all out for their fifth studio album KALIYUGA: shrink wrap and jewel CD cases were eliminated, vinyl was pressed on a calcium-based eco-plastic and a special paper tape was used for boxes. They also carefully calculated emissions generated through the recording process and offset all 26.37 tonnes of emissions through the purchase of high quality (Gold Standard-verified) carbon credits in the Yarra Yarra Biodiversity Corridor, Western Australia.
#BYOBottle Campaign. Images courtesy artists, left to right, top to bottom:
Jade Imagine, Josh Pyke, Vika and Linda Bull, Courtney Barnett & Jen Cloher, Ainslie Wills, Adalita, Clea, Bernard Fanning, Ella Hooper, Liz Stringer, Ian Kenny (Birds of Tokyo), All Our Exes Live In Texas, Oscar Dawson (Holy Holy), Midnight Oil, Angie McMahon
For Aussie musicians, when there’s no pandemic raging, touring large distances is pretty much unavoidable. But the average Australian tour (with 15 shows) creates 28 tonnes of carbon emissions. Behind these stats lies the fact that Australia has high polluting cars and relatively minimal spending on public transport. It’s why our transport sector represents 18% of Australia’s annual emissions, our fastest growing and second largest source of pollution. So along with encouraging better transport infrastructure, it’s important that we improve the way we travel.

For transport, planning is where you can make the most impact. So use the answers to the questions below to put together a plan for greener touring. As with waste, our aim should be to avoid travel impacts where we can by reducing the number of trips, performing online, or taking the most efficient route. Where that’s not possible, using more efficient transport modes lessens your impact (hint: literally anything is greener than plane travel) as does reducing the weight of gear that you take with you.

You can start by asking good questions, like:

- Can I take less equipment or hire some of it locally?
- Can I transport my equipment more efficiently (e.g. road freight or train, instead of plane)?
- Can I reduce the number of vehicles or crew travelling, car-pool, use more efficient vehicles or hire some crew locally?
- Can I travel in off-peak times to improve vehicle fuel efficiency?
- Can I use an electric vehicle or a hybrid, rather than one that’s powered by fossil fuels? Will a smaller vehicle do the job?
- Can I use another form of transport over flying?
 Audience impacts

One of the biggest potential sources of emissions is from fans getting to shows – there are so many more of them than you. So considering where you hold your shows and how you communicate with fans about their transport options is arguably even more important than thinking about your own direct impacts.

- **Accessible venues**: Prioritise venues that are easy to get to by public transport, walking or riding.
- **Travel information**: Include information about public transport, bike and carpooling with gig details. And encourage your fans to use those options. Melbourne has Journey Planner, Sydney has Trip Planner, and so does Brisbane.
- **Audience incentives**: If you’re able, offer fans incentives like access to sound check, entry to a competition or free (Earth friendly) merch if they make greener choices.
- **Ride sharing**: Consider some of the many new online ways to encourage better transport options like supporting fans to connect for rides via social media or using a platform like coseats to facilitate ride sharing.

What About Carbon Offsetting?

Offsetting is a way of compensating for your carbon dioxide emissions. It doesn’t stop your impact, but reduces emissions somewhere else on your behalf. When you pay for carbon offsets, they’ll use your money for things like:

- Building renewable energy projects, which switches electricity production from dirty fossil fuels to clean, green options
- Planting trees, which absorb carbon dioxide as they grow
- Energy efficient technology, like electric stoves and lamps, to replace older, dirtier technology
- Methane recovery, from landfill or livestock, recapturing waste gas for energy

If you measure all of your emissions for a project (like a tour), an entity (like a band), or an activity (like an album), you can buy offsets equal to that amount and make it ‘carbon neutral’. You’ve still created emissions, but you’ve effectively balanced them out by contributing to an equal amount of offsets somewhere else.

So, can we just offset all our emissions? No. We can’t use offsets as an escape hatch from reality. There’s already far too much carbon in the atmosphere, and offsets are hard to measure and monitor (and even offsets that look ok can turn out to be downright fraudulent).

What we need is deep green, transformative change. So start with a genuine plan to lower your own carbon emissions - and encourage your fans to do the same - then once you’ve reduced as much as you can, think of offsets as a positive bonus.

Some products (like flights) offer carbon offsetting as an additional add-on. You’re arguably better to do it than not at all, but check what you’re getting and consider offsetting separately if the quality isn’t high. Below is our suggested approach.

Start by measuring your carbon footprint

- For your personal footprint: Carbon Positive Australia
- For smaller gigs: Green Your Noise carbon calculator (a project we helped develop)
- For a deeper analysis of large tours or events: ARUP’s Circulate or Julie’s Bicycle’s Creative Green Tools

Reduce your emissions as much as possible

- Use this guide to reduce your impacts from waste, transport, food, merch and more, and develop a plan to keep improving over time. Need support? Get in touch with the team at Green Music Australia. It’s literally why we exist.

Choose quality offsets that are independently accredited

- If you do buy offsets, look for ones that are accredited with a reliable standard that is there to
to make sure offset projects do what they say:
- Gold Standard credits accredited by the World Wildlife Fund
- Verified Carbon Units (VCUs) accredited by international non-profit VERRA

Here are some reputable sites where you can buy good quality offsets directly (as suggested by the David Suzuki Foundation):
- Gold Standard is, as the name suggests, the gold standard
- Planetair only uses Gold Standard offsets
- Atmosfair sells offsets from projects that are either registered or applying for Gold Standard
- Less uses high quality offsets, is independently audited and tracks offsets on internationally recognised registries

- And a couple of good local options:
  - Treecreds
  - Aboriginal Carbon Foundation

Not all offset projects are created equal. And it can be hard even for experts to sort the good from the bad. We think the options above are good choices, but things can change. That’s why we suggest you think of offsets as a way to take responsibility for your unavoidable emissions, rather than as an ultimate solution. If you try to make big claims about your ‘carbon neutrality’ without making sure your offsets are reliable, you could run into issues. Reforestation projects, for example, are popular but risky because of difficulties in measuring, managing and monitoring the projects and the captured carbon. Some even have issues with climate colonisation, where overseas projects infringe on First Nations lands.

If you want to understand how different kinds of offset projects work, along with the associated risks and things to watch out for - like double counting, poor management, propping up dodgy industries, and more - check out our website.

What else?
Of course, these kinds of individual actions are just the beginning. Truly sustainable transport options can only be realised with significant government investment – think fast trains linking capital cities and green hydrogen powering planes. So while we’re improving personal footprints, we also need to push for collective, political change. That’s why your voice is the most powerful tool you’ve got. See Speaking Up for our suggestions on how to use it well. Or get in touch if you want to get more involved in the Green Music movement.
Case Study: The Green Touring Toolkit

Want to green your next tour? Arts on Tour’s Green Touring Toolkit (2022) is a step-by-step guide that comes with a handy carbon calculator designed by ARUP. We recommend checking out the toolkit and using it to support you and your team as you green your travel plans.

Some key take-aways:

• To make your touring green, there are actions we can take pre-tour, on tour and post-tour. Good planning is important.
• To get started, make a commitment, get your team on board and make a plan.
• Map out your touring route and look for ways to remove or redesign high emission legs. The graph below shows the striking difference between different modes of travel.
• Follow a hierarchy of Remove, Redesign, Offset - with offsetting as the final priority.
• Assign any money saved on more sustainable travel choices to a budget line for offsetting.

Read more in the toolkit at Arts On Tour’s Green Touring website.

TRANSPORT EMISSIONS COMPARISON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>CO₂ Emissions (kg)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flights</td>
<td>2,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol Sedan</td>
<td>803</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hybrid Sedan</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freight 8T Truck</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30pp/500km
Let’s think about food. Firstly, ask yourself: Do you know where your food comes from and how it’s produced? What about when you’re on tour? The reality is, most of the time most of us don’t know. And we often have less predictable cooking and eating routines when we’re on tour. There are lots of good reasons for pondering the source of our food. Nasty agricultural practices spread toxins, damage land and waterways, hurt our kin (the other creatures and beings we live among), and our own personal health. Plus food waste is a major contributor to global heating. So what can be done? Probably the single biggest thing you can do personally is to reduce the amount of meat (especially red meat) you eat. Meat production contributes at least 23% of the world’s greenhouse gases: more than all cars, trains and planes combined. By just replacing the carbon-heavy beef on your plate with chicken, you can cut your diet’s carbon footprint in half. And if you go a step further and take into account what beef-producing land could have otherwise been, like a carbon-absorbing, oxygen-producing forest, this research paper estimates the ‘carbon cost’ of beef is 73 times higher than soy.

**Personal food actions:**

- **Eat more veg:** As well as being far [far greener](#), they’re also healthy and delicious, easy to cook and often cheaper. Resources like [HappyCow](#) exist to help you find vegan/vegetarian options when out on the town. Use this [carbon calculator](#) to compare different options.

- **Buy from bulk food stores:** Use this [Australia-wide directory](#) and reduce your packaging and waste.

- **Plan ahead:** Use a shopping list for touring and rehearsal meals so you don’t buy unnecessary food. Aussies throw away $8 billion worth of edible food each year.

- **Buy locally:** the closer your food is grown, the less emissions. Find your [nearest farmer’s market here](#).

- **Buy ethically:** If you are going to buy meat, make it organic and as local as possible. And find ethical seafood using the [Australian Maritime Conservation Society’s guide](#) to sustainable seafood.

- **Shop sustainably:** Keep BYO shopping bags in the band van and grab some nifty [produce bags](#). And learn more about shopping sustainably with this [Sustainability Victoria guide](#).
What about my fans?

Just like encouraging fans to take public transport to your shows, providing them with sustainable food is where you can make the biggest impact.

- **Make sustainable choices** If you have food stalls, source local, sustainable foods and preference vegetarian options. Check out the food-service requirements used by Jack Johnson and scale it to the size of your shows.

- **Sort out food waste** Enquire about the possibility of composting (see our waste section). If you have catering, prioritise companies that are low-waste and environmentally sustainable, like some of these companies. If food waste is unavoidable, ask if venues can donate leftovers to a local charity through organisations like OzHarvest.

What else?

Of course, these kinds of individual actions are just the beginning. We know the issues we face are systemic. So while we’re improving personal footprints, we also need to push for collective, political change. That’s why your voice is the most powerful tool you’ve got. See Speaking Up for our suggestions on how to use it well. Or get in touch if you want to get more involved in the Green Music movement.
Fashion & Merch

One of the most important ways we’ve been financially supporting each other in the music industry recently is by purchasing artist merchandise. Unfortunately, there’s no way to be 100% sustainable when selling merch, but we recognise that it’s often a necessary source of income for musicians. Here’s our guide to making it as eco-friendly and ethical as possible!

There are a few things to consider when outsourcing ethical merchandise, and we think it’s time to dig out our old band tees, hang them out to dry and see the impact of cherishable vs. perishable.

What’s wrong with my normal merch?

1. They’re usually full of plastic. 60% of new clothes are made from synthetic fibres which never biodegrade and instead just break down into smaller and smaller parts, filling our waterways and oceans with microplastics.

2. Non-synthetic clothes need vast amounts of water to produce. It can take 2700 litres of water to make one cotton t-shirt and cotton accounts for 24% of the world’s insecticide use.

3. ‘Fast fashion’ means clothes often end up in landfill. In Australia, 6000kg of clothing and textiles are discarded every 10 minutes – that’s 23kg per person per year. It’s not sustainable and it can’t be continued forever.
As an artist, you can play a role in promoting sustainable fashion. This means looking for brands that use organic cotton or hemp, recycled content, and fair trade working conditions. If you already have a partnership with a merch provider, ask them about a more sustainable option. And if it isn’t you making these decisions but your manager or record label, make sure you raise this with them and ask them to factor it in. A handful of Australian merch providers - including Love Police ATM and Super Special - are starting to lead the way by integrating greener options into their offerings. These include plastic-free packaging and increased transparency around their supply chain, linking through to some providers’ environmental responsibility statements. While greener options don’t always come as standard, and may require artists to make a special request, we think the upgrade is worth it - even with a higher price tag. With more and more artists pushing for sustainable merch, the options will get better and better, and this is what fans will come to expect!

Case Study: Sunfruits

Melbourne-based 60s psychedelic garage-pop band Sunfruits collaborated with Green Music Australia to create organic t-shirts with the slogan ‘No Music on a Dead Planet’. Info cards were included in every LP cover to encourage fans to get involved, plus a portion of profits raised were donated to support our advocacy efforts. Legends!
## Some ethical merch providers in Australia in 2022: a quick comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Etiko Merch</strong></th>
<th>This brand has a traceable supply chain and organic, fair trade cotton, plus wins awards for their ethical production.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OCC Apparel</strong></td>
<td>OCC Apparel manages eight different sustainable brands. All are ethical and most are made with organic cotton, but are made in different places and have varying materials such as bamboo. See a comparison of their brands below and read more about wholesale ethical merch on their <a href="#">website</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shirtbox</strong></td>
<td>Entirely solar-powered operations mean Shirtbox is a great place to head for merch options. Check out their eco range <a href="#">here</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **First Nations businesses** | Increased economic participation for First Nations people provides a critical pathway for economic independence. And First Nations businesses and staff can bring significant assets to your work, understanding western systems while also being grounded deeply and strongly in this country as the hosts to the oldest living culture. Use [Supply Nation](#), the biggest national database of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, designed to create relationships and a more inclusive economy. Note: The majority of companies are 50% Indigenous and non-indigenous partnerships. Without the resources for accreditation, some are brilliant, but others need to be sensitively culturally scrutinised. Search the Aboriginal Business Directory in your area. [The Indigenous Businesses Council of Australia](#) (IBCA) is the Peak body for Aboriginal Business and are deeply invested in the financial success and economic independence of First Nations peoples in Australia. You can call them for a list of businesses in the regions you are working or touring in. Alternately, reach out to a state/territory based Aboriginal business directory:  
  - Queensland Black Business Finder  
  - Victorian Aboriginal Business Directory  
  - WA Aboriginal Business Directory  
  - SA Aboriginal Business Register  
  - NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce. A final option when designing your merch is to use sites like [@ausindigenousfashion](#) on Instagram to find Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and designers. |
| **Other**      | Ask your current merch provider what their more sustainable options are. It’s so great to get these conversations going. And since we’re living in the midst of a climate emergency, well into the 21st century, they really should have some options by now. |
New merch isn’t the only merch.

If you have old merch that didn’t sell, repurpose it! The 1975 reprinted new designs onto their old t-shirts, saving money and avoiding waste. Opera North used old costumes to make beeswax wraps. Or consider incorporating an environmental message into your merch, like WAAX or Alison Wonderland.

Hey everyone instead of doing the Valentine’s Day drop I was planning, I wanted to replace the design to put something up specifically to help the brave Australian firefighters & wildlife during this horrible crisis. haven’t produced this yet, but wanted to help straight away, so this will be a presale with these shirts arriving in a few weeks. All mine & managements profits will be donated straight to:

WIRES (http://wires.org.au)
NSW Rural Fire Service (http://rfs.nsw.gov.au)
Country Fire Authority of Victoria (http://cfa.vic.gov.au)
- websites in there Incase you want to donate directly

100% of my Merch profits for the entire month of January will also go towards this

Other merch options: water bottles, planting seeds & cardboard album covers.

There’s more than just clothes! You can have your own personalised reusable water bottles or reusable coffee cups, which artists like Ash Grunwald, Taylor Swift and Maggie Rogers all have as merch, or a tote bag for shopping. Tim Minchin had hugely popular plantable seed cards as part of his tour merch pack.
When selling CDs, we recommend recycled cardboard CD covers, like the ones offered by Austen, a carbon neutral company. Look for cardboard/paper packaging that’s from sustainably managed forests (the best is FSC certified, followed by PEFC). If we all switched to cardboard instead of plastic packaging, the industry’s packaging emissions could be reduced by up to 95%. Alternatively, don’t release physical copies at all and just sell your music online as digital downloads (see Office & Studio for more on streaming vs hard copy music).

**Case Study:**

**The 1975**

The 1975 repurposed old merch that didn’t sell from earlier tours by printing new graphics over the old designs. Fans could bring old The 1975 shirts (or ANY old shirt) to their concerts and get the same screen print done then and there.

![Image credit: @trumanblack on Instagram](image)

**Shopping for yourself?**

What we wear makes a statement, whether we’re conscious of it or not. If we wear and fetishise fast fashion and unethically produced luxury brands, we’re effectively encouraging others to do the same. That’s true whether you buy it yourself or if it’s gifted at a club or festival, from a partner or a sponsor. We all need clothes and, as artists, our fashion choices are an important part of our brand. They also shape the culture and the world we live in. So make a sustainable statement with your wardrobe.
Case Study: More than just a merch stand

On her 2019 Complex tour, enviro legend Montaigne ran a Red Cross clothes drive at a Sydney show. Fans were invited to drop off old clothes, which were then donated to the Red Cross. If you’re thinking of doing the same, consider also collecting clothes that are no longer suitable for op shops (irreparable tears, old socks etc.) and giving them to brands that collect clothes for recycling using this handy directory.

Below are our top sources for finding more ethical fashion brands. Note that brands are often ranked in comparison with their peers, so some larger commercial brands may look a little better than they are at first glance.

For best results:

• Avoid new purchases wherever possible.
• Reduce the amount of clothing you purchase.
• Buy second-hand and vintage.
• Then, and only then, buy from the most ethical and sustainable options using the links below.

Where to find the good stuff

• Good On You is a leading source for fashion brand ratings, using expert analysis to give each brand a clear and practical ethics and sustainability score. And their database is searchable via smart phone app or the website.
• If you want to dig a little deeper to understand the issues beneath these kinds of ratings, check out:
  » the 2020 Ethical Fashion Report, which grades brands from A+ to F based on strict guidelines, checking for an absence of child labour and worker exploitation, plus the mitigation of environmental damage
  » the 2019 Toxic Textiles report for the environmental impacts of popular brands
  » the Global Organic Textile Standard website
  » the #whomademyclothes movement on social media

Set design

When it comes to sustainable set design, we in the music industry can look to the broader arts world for some ideas and inspiration. Julie’s Bicycle is an awesome UK charity that’s dedicated to making the creative industries sustainable. They have a vast set of resources like guides, fact sheets and webinars.

And leading theatre organisations in the UK have just developed a ‘Green Book’ that aims to create a common standard for making theatre sustainably. There’s lots of info in there, but
essentially the publication supports theatre makers to:

• Do more with less.
• Use more reused components and recycled materials.
• Think where materials come from.
• Reduce harmful chemicals.
• Reduce travel. Reduce deliveries.
• Make sure everything gets used again.

So if you’re about to go deep on design, you could do worse than setting aside a little time to dig into the Green Book for loads of great suggestions on topics like:

• Producing a show.
• Sets and scenery.
• Props.
• Costumes, hair and make-up.
• Lighting, sound and AV.
What else?

As we’ve said right through this guide, these kinds of individual actions are just the beginning. They’re important because they soften our impact. They’re also important because doing them changes who we are and how we relate to Country. But the issues we face are deep and systemic. So while we’re improving personal footprints, we also need to push for collective, political change. That’s why your voice is the most powerful tool you’ve got. See Speaking Up for our suggestions on how to use it well. Or get in touch if you want to get more involved in the Green Music movement.

“Action on behalf of life transforms. Because the relationship between self and the world is reciprocal, it is not a question of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting. As we work to heal the Earth, the Earth heals us.”

– Robin Wall Kimmerer
Acknowledgements

Authors
This guide has been written by Rhoda Roberts AO and Matt Wicking and produced by Green Music Australia with support from many generous contributors.

Rhoda Roberts AO is a significant force on the Australian arts scene. A member of the Bundjalung nation, Wijabul clan of Northern NSW and South East QLD, Rhoda is Festival Director of the Boomerang Festival - Byron Bay Bluesfest, Creative Director of the Parrtjima Festival (NT) and an Associate of Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA) and until recently headed First Nations Programming for the Sydney Opera House. A much awarded arts executive, Rhoda received an AO for distinguished service to the performing arts, leadership, advocacy and promoting contemporary Indigenous culture. In 2019, she was recognised with a Ros Bower Award from the Australia Council; in 2018, she received the Helpman Award – The Sue Nattrass Award; in 1998 she received a Deadly Award for Broadcasting, and in 1997, she was recognized with a Sidney Myer Facilitators award.

Matt Wicking is a facilitator, artist and activist. A settler living on Wurundjeri land and long-time advocate for environmental and social justice causes, Matt works with progressive groups to help them amplify their impact. He currently works as freelance facilitator and environmental consultant with Cloud Catcher and as singer with Melbourne band, The General Assembly. He has a Masters of Environment, plus degrees in Psychology and Commerce. Previous roles include: running the Future Makers Fellowship at the Centre for Sustainability Leadership; Communications Advisor at the Bureau of Meteorology; Greenie-in-Residence at Arts House; facilitating environmental education at Monash Sustainable Development Institute; and many years’ experience as a sustainability consultant.

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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