

REDUCING EXHIBITION WASTE: A GUIDE FOR EXHIBITORS



As the world increasingly embraces sustainability, customers are looking to business to demonstrate their commitment to this area, specifically as it relates to waste avoidance, repurposing and recycling. For exhibitors, this presents a fantastic opportunity to communicate your own sustainability commitment and initiatives.

HOW DO EXHIBITION RESOURCES TURN INTO WASTE?

Materials and products used for exhibitions have traditionally been designed for single or limited use. The construction materials and products used to create a functional and aesthetic exhibition space are often discarded at the completion of the exhibition. When determining the types of products and materials used to promote your organisation, it is important to consider the end of life of such products and materials.

Through better planning and design we demonstrate our sustainability commitment and help minimise our event footprint to support a better tomorrow.:

Waste management preference	Action
Avoid	Prevent over-ordering and wastage. Record and monitor giveaways to inform the number of resources expected to be required for future events.
	Lower value products often end up in our bins. Select products that are valued by exhibition attendees. Avoid the use of cheap products that have little value or purpose beyond the exhibition.
	Innovate by providing a digital alternative to physical goods.
	Offer a consumable. People like to eat and drink, why not offer a consumable product, such as coffee served in reusable or compostable cups?
Repurpose	Investigate product take-back schemes and choose to support suppliers offering such schemes.
	Establish partnerships with charities requiring the goods you are offering and determine opportunities to repurpose products and materials to support them.
	Work with Adelaide Convention Centre and the exhibition organiser to connect with local needs-based organisations to donate items following the exhibition.
Recycle	When procuring goods for exhibitions, determine the useful life of the resource. Prioritise sustainable options, such as compostable and recyclable products.

Resources (waste) left by exhibitors often does not have a defined recovery stream. When planning your exhibition, consider how you can ensure that the materials and products used for the exhibition can continue to be used beyond a single event.

Plan – Ensure the materials you are offering attendees and using within your exhibition space meet both you and your customer’s business and sustainability needs.

Design – Design the stand to utilise materials and products that have an established repurposing and recycling stream. Reputable stand build organisations offer recyclable options.

Procure – Prioritise suppliers offering products that meet your sustainability business goals and customer expectations.



Pictured: Items in use at an exhibitor at Adelaide Convention Centre that have an established repurposing and recycling stream.

COMMON RESOURCES LEFT BEHIND AFTER EXHIBITIONS

Product / Material	Value	The problem
Furniture – chairs, stools, tables, couches, lighting, televisions, screens	Higher	Higher value items designed for multiple uses are often left at Adelaide Convention Centre at the conclusion of an exhibition. These items retain their value over time and can be repurposed or donated to charity. Partnerships with charities can ensure maximum social benefit for higher value products.
Bags, satchels, reusable coffee cups, metal water bottles	Medium	Whilst valued by some, medium value items are often quickly discarded. Unfortunately, branded bags are commonly left behind and found in our bin systems. It is recommended that more sustainable alternatives of medium value items are adopted.
Plastic water bottles, paper pads, pens, business cards	Lower	Lower value items are the most commonly discarded. These items lose value quickly and are the most commonly found items in our exhibition bins. Avoid the use of these products.

ADELAIDE CHARITIES

There are a range of local Adelaide-based charities who will accept and repurpose used goods for higher and medium value items. Contacting a charity to assess whether your exhibition goods are required is a great first step.

South Australian charity	Examples of accepted goods
Hutt Street Centre	Furniture, adult-sized backpacks, toiletries, skin care products
Rufus SA	Furniture, toys, blankets, towels, white goods
Red Cross	Clothing, bags, homewares, books, DVDs, CDs
Second Chances SA	Furniture, white goods
Treasure Boxes	Children and adolescent clothing, baby and toddler sleeping and feeding products
OzHarvest	Unused food that meets the requirements of Australian food safety standards
FoodBank	Non-perishable food items and toiletries
Faithworks	Unused food that meets the requirements of Australian food safety standards
Baptist Care SA	Sleeping bags, scarves, beanies, water bottles, towels, shampoos and conditioners, body wash, deodorants, toothbrushes and toothpaste

ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE'S APPROACH TO WASTE

Adelaide Convention Centre is committed to eliminating waste to landfill.

Through the creation of 18 separate waste streams and close consultation with our resource recovery partners, the Centre has successfully reduced its waste from landfill to less than one percent. We know that we can do more in this area and are working towards removing problem materials from our waste streams through greater collaboration with our suppliers, clients and partners. To ensure we continue to strive for better, the Centre has established a 100% diversion of waste from landfill target by June 2025.

To learn more about Adelaide Convention Centre's sustainability programs, including global EarthCheck certification, visit adelaidecc.com.au/sustainability.