

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING



### WHAT ARE GUIDING PRINCIPLES?

In order to manage our environmental and social performance as a company, we have developed a series of guiding principles outlining the standard practices we ask all our staff to adhere to whilst at work.

By following these principles, you will be helping us to maximise our positive impacts and minimise any negative impacts ensuring we are a responsible and sustainable business.

We also encourage you to think about how you can apply these principles to your life outside of work and hope that this will also enable you to reduce your personal footprint.

### SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Whilst purchasing goods provides a great opportunity for positive economic impact, it also results in the use of natural resources, the production of emissions to produce the goods, the generation of waste associated with packaging and disposal of leftover/excess goods, and emissions associated with the transport of the goods.

These guiding principles outline GTI's policies around purchasing for the purpose of maximising the positive impacts and minimising the negative.

These principles should be applied by all GTI employees purchasing goods on behalf of the company, but we also encourage you to consider applying them for your personal purchasing.

### BEFORE YOU BUY...

Whilst GTI has to purchase goods in order to operate, we believe this can be done in a responsible way. Doing this requires putting sustainability at the top of the list when it comes to making purchasing decisions. Most people consider price and quality when purchasing, but it is less common for people to think about the possible impacts that purchasing creates.

At GTI we are committed to making sustainability a primary decision making factor when purchasing goods. To do this we ask all employees who make purchasing decisions to follow these principles.

Before you buy, consideration should be given to:

- ✓ The necessity of buying the goods
  - Does GTI or the client really need the goods? Are they essential or a 'nice to have'? Will the item definitely be used? These questions should always be asked to avoid unnecessary purchasing.
- ✓ Finding the most sustainable alternatives

- ✓ Is the item for single use? Can existing goods/items be reused? Are the goods made from organic/fair trade or recycled materials, are they made in Australia? Do they meet the relevant certification standard?
- ✓ Some examples of alternative include using crockery and glassware rather than buying single use, disposable items. Asking your colleagues if they have spare items you can reuse such as folders and stationary. Consider giveaways made from home grown recycled products rather than plastic items transported long distances from overseas countries.
- ✓ Certification standards also exist for a number of goods – for paper products look for the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) label, for organic products look for ACO (Australian Certified Organic), the Australian Energy Rating Programme gives star ratings for appliances, APEAT for electronic products, Water Efficiency labelling and standards.
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See [here](#) for more.

- ✓ The amount of goods that need to be purchased  
  
For one off items, can less be purchased? When buying regular items, can they be consolidated into a bulk purchase to reduce the amount of packaging and the amount of transportation?

- ✓ The packaging and transport required for delivery

Target goods with minimal packaging or bio-degradable packaging and avoid goods using plastic packaging. This will usually require you to speak to the supplier, asking them what alternatives they have to reduce packaging. Will they accept the packaging back? If they have no alternatives, ask them to consider this for the future.

Check where the goods are located and prioritise local suppliers as this will reduce emissions associated with transport, and also ensure GTI is supporting the local economy (see below).

Consider whether suppliers implement sustainable business practices – they may have an environmental management system certified under ISO140001, they may have environmental policies or other initiatives in place to reduce packaging and emissions. Suppliers that don't have any of these things or talk about their environmental performance should generally be avoided. If they ask why you are not buying from them, tell them.

- ✓ Buying locally wherever possible

Buying locally not only reduces the impacts from transportation, it also ensures GTI is supporting the local economy. Local suppliers should always be prioritised (ie Sydney or within your city/town), however if local suppliers aren't feasible, consider other Australian suppliers before considering overseas suppliers. GTI will select preferred suppliers for all regularly purchased goods taking these principles into account.

GTI staff working remotely should consider how they can implement these measures in their home office such as purchasing and using recycled paper products and avoiding the purchase of single use items.

## SUPPLIER QUESTIONS

If you are responsible for selecting GTI suppliers – use the following crib sheet to guide your decision making

1. Do some online research to find possible suppliers.
  - Look at where they are located/and or where they source their products from
  - Do they talk about sustainability or their environmental performance?
  - Take a look at their policies and any other initiatives they might be taking to reduce their environmental impact and improve their social impact.
  - Do they have any relevant certifications?

Narrow down a short list of suppliers using this information.

2. Contact your shortlist
  - Make sure you're speaking to someone who knows their products, if in doubt ask to speak to a senior sales person.
  - Tell them GTI only considers purchasing from responsible suppliers

- Ask them about the goods you are interested in, question where they source their products/materials from and what sort of packaging they use.
- Ask them how they deliver the goods

3. Make your decision

Use all the information gathered along with these guiding principles, and considerations of price and quality, to make a decision about which supplier to use.

# THANK YOU

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



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### SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Organising events is a big part of what GTI does yet events have the potential to create a lot of waste and leave a large carbon footprint. AT GTI our goal is to hold successful and memorable events with the smallest possible footprint.

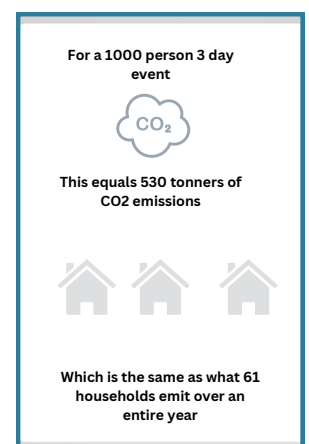
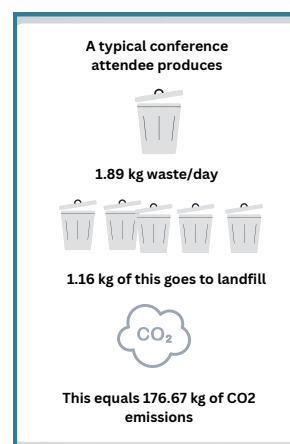
These guiding principles outline our policies for achieving this, and should be applied by all GTI employees organising and coordinating events. We also encourage you to consider applying these principles when and if you organise personal events.

### INTRODUCTION

Sustainable event management is the process of integrating environmental and social responsibility issues into event planning. It requires you to consider the needs and values of different stakeholders that are impacted by the event that is being held. On the one hand, steps can be taken to reduce significant negative impacts, or harm, such as creating excessive solid waste. While on the other, opportunities can be sought for events to leave positive legacies that benefit individuals and communities, including increasing local income.

Every event is different in size, scale, location and audience and this means that every event will have its own unique footprint. You won't know what this footprint is for your event unless you take the time to measure it.

The graphics below summarise a typical conference event footprint.



Whilst we might not be organising conferences of this scale, at GTI we want to make sure the footprint of our events is as small as possible while the value of the event to attendees and suppliers is maximised.

## PRE-PLANNING

Before you start organising your event there are some questions that you need to ask yourself:

- Do I actually need to organise an event? Is this the best way to achieve the desired result?

It's easy to assume that an event is the right thing to do if this is how you, or a client has always worked, but think about what Charles Kettering said

- 'If you have always done it that way, it is probably wrong'

It's always worth stopping to think about what you are trying to achieve. Does an event provide the best means to achieve your objective? Or can other, more sustainable options be considered?

- If an event is the only answer, does it need to be face to face?

Again it is often assumed that face to face events are necessary without considering the alternatives. Could the event be conducted virtually? What clever and creative ways could this be done? There is always a better way to do things, we just have to put our minds to finding it.

If it's not possible, then could you at least consider an option to podcast, webcast or video conference elements of the event? This could greatly increase its reach whilst minimising its impacts.

We shouldn't be afraid of trying to do things differently – this is what will make us stand out.

## PLANNING

Once you've committed to organising an event, sustainability should be in the forefront of your mind so the event can be planned in a way that will ensure the smallest possible footprint.

### Choosing a location

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Location choice has a big impact on the amount of emissions an event will create. This is therefore one of your biggest opportunities to keep carbon emissions to a minimum.

- ✓ Think about both attendees and staff – where are they coming from? Do they need to stay somewhere to attend the event? Can the event and the accommodation be in the same place? If not can the event be in walkable distance to accommodation?
- ✓ If there's no way to avoid the need for transportation – can the location be easily reachable by public transport? If you need shuttles, can you organise group shuttles with hybrid or alternate fuel vehicles?

### Choosing a Venue

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The venue choice also has a significant impact on the footprint size of your event.

- ✓ Think about the type of venue and consider its emission risk – a moving venue (ie a boat) will generate higher emissions as they need to use energy for both power and fuel.
- ✓ Look for venues that have clear sustainability policies and practices. Some may have certifications – such as ISO20121 the international standard for sustainable events or ISO14001 for environmental management systems. Regardless of this, ask them what they will do to reduce the environmental footprint of your event. If accommodation is required for the event, do the same with the hotel.



- ✓ Think about how the event will be powered. Look for a venue that makes the most of natural lighting and natural ventilation. Think about the timing of the event, can it be held during the day to reduce power consumption? Regardless of these factors, ask the venue how they will ensure minimal power use, and whether they obtain their power from renewable sources. GTI's preference is to only use venues that offer 100% green power.
- ✓ Think about the design of your event. Base activities around standard hire items with minimal construction and avoid approaches that will not be re-useable in other situations.
- ✓ Avoid the use of generators wherever possible, and if not possible, ensure your generator suppliers are using modern, fuel saving and environmentally friendly units.
- ✓ Ask the venue if they will track and monitor things like energy consumption and waste generation. If they don't, you will need to do this yourself so it will be much easier to use a venue that will do this for you.

## WASTE

After energy consumption, waste generation is one of the next biggest impacts resulting from an event. It is GTI's policy to avoid generating any waste from events that goes to landfill. To achieve this, you will need to consider your agenda and activities and think about all the possible sources of waste that the event will create.

Work with the venue to create a waste reduction plan that addresses all of the waste sources you've identified

- ✓ The first step in your plan will be to eliminate the generation of waste. Consider different way to conduct activities to avoid waste being generated – eg don't print out programmes or an agenda. Make sure you ask the venue what they can do to eliminate the generation of waste as they be able to provide alternatives.
- ✓ The second step should be to find ways to minimise the amount of waste generated eg ensure your venue uses water glasses and jugs, and does not use bottled or unnecessarily imported water. Avoid the provision of gift bags and giveaways – think of more creative and impactful ways to make your attendees remember your event.
- ✓ Think about how you may be able to reuse items from previous events or create items that will definitely be used again eg banners, stands name badges. It is GTI's policy to avoid anything that involves or requires single use plastic.
- ✓ After eliminating and reusing waste, think about what's left. How can you make sure this will be recycled? What recycling facilities does your venue provide? They will need to be made easy/obvious for attendees to use so they work effectively. Make sure the venue will monitor this throughout the event and report on effectiveness.

## CATERING

Ask to see the caterers' environmental policy and ask how they minimise their environmental impacts. Look for a caterer addressing the following things:

- ✓ Fresh, local and in season organic food or food that is fair trade,
- ✓ Use of minimal animal products (ie. meat) and clear vegetarian options,
- ✓ Use of fish selected from sustainable fish supplies,
- ✓ Avoidance of packaging and plastic products,
- ✓ Uses reusable crockery and cutlery, or if not possible uses biodegradable alternatives,
- ✓ Offers reusable or recycled napkins
- ✓ Donates leftover food or conducts composting of food waste

Some other things to consider:

- ✓ Get a clear indication of numbers to avoid over-catering
- ✓ Ensure your event does not use individually wrapped items, such as mints, lollies, salt, pepper or sugar satchels

## GO PAPERLESS

In today's digital world it is relatively easy for your event to go paperless.

- ✓ Avoid invitations - create an event page, app or email subscription for your attendees
- ✓ Avoid printed promotional material - use electronic communication at every opportunity.
- ✓ Use your event page and app to provide information before the event and electronic means to supply promotional information during the event eg encourage the use of plasmas, projected or electronic

- ✓ Clearly communicate to attendees that the event will be paperless and why so they understand and are motivated to do the same.
- ✓ Ensure printed signage is reusable ie make it generic, avoid using dates etc
- ✓ When printing is unavoidable use recycled paper
- ✓ Send out link after the event with relevant information, presentation, papers

## PURCHASING

When searching for and engaging suppliers you will need to ensure they are using sustainable practices.

Take a look through the GTI Sustainable Purchasing guide above for how to select suppliers

## COMMUNICATION

Communication is an essential part of any successful event but it is extremely important for sustainable events. You can plan the most sustainable venue possible, reduce the volume of waste that will be generated, and work with sustainable suppliers, but this will not be 100% effective if your event attendees don't understand what you're trying to achieve and why. Attendees play the critical role of implementing all of your good work. They can't do this unless you tell them how, but perhaps even more importantly – WHY.

Humans are generally creatures of habit, so even if you ask them to do something - if its not what they normally do, many still won't do it. This is where the 'why' comes in, it gives people a reason to consider doing things differently. Better still, sustainability provides a 'why' that usually triggers an emotional response which is stronger and more likely to create a positive outcome than a rational response will.

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## AVOID THE GREENWASH TRAP

There is however a delicate balance to be had when communicating sustainability messages. Most people will have been to an event where they've been told sustainability is important while being handed a plastic bag full of glossy promotional information. Or, a sustainably-sourced, organic cotton bag, full of single use plastic giveaways.

Greenwash destroys attendee engagement in sustainable practices, and builds increased levels of cynicism around the long term effectiveness of sustainability. At GTI we want to avoid this at all costs.

The trick to avoiding greenwash is simply to practice what you preach, and back up what you are saying with evidence of good practice. Fortunately, by following the practices outlined in this document you will be able to do this.

## TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABILITY

- ✓ Don't feel you have to put sustainability up front and centre when it comes to communicating. It's important, but it's very much a secondary message to the purpose of the event.
- ✓ Equally, don't tack sustainability on at the end of your communications as a cursory statement eg 'We're holding this great event, where you see X, Y and Z, oh and by the way it's sustainable'.
- ✓ Use sustainability messaging as the backdrop to your other communications. Make it easy to find, clear and engaging, and backed with examples of how it's being applied throughout the event.

## EXAMPLES FOR EVENTS

- ✓ As part of your invitation, provide clear communications to attendees advising how they can get to the venue via public transport, by foot or bike, or suggest car pooling as a last port of call. Consider incentives for people using public transport.
- ✓ In the lead up to the event tell attendees how you are trying to minimise the amount of waste generated and advise them of the recycling arrangements that will be available during the event. At the same time you can also suggest they bring their own cup or water bottle.
- ✓ During the event clearly signpost vegetarian food, the recycling and food waste systems and any other initiatives you have put in place.



Celebrate the successes made through all phases of the event:

- ✓ In the lead up to the event, highlight facts like - the event is paperless, only renewable energy is being utilised, that we are saving CO2 by holding the event in the same place as the accommodation.
- ✓ During the event, highlight facts like – by recycling this waste you are helping us reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
- ✓ After the event – thanks to your support we saved xxx CO2 during our event and provided \$\$\$ to local suppliers.

**THANK YOU**