

REDUCING EXHIBITION WASTE A GUIDE FOR STAND DESIGNERS & BUILDERS



Adelaide Convention Centre is committed to eliminating waste to landfill. Our guiding waste management principles are informed by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and designed to reduce the linear 'take-make-waste' model commonly adopted in the global events industry. Our key aims are:

1. The elimination of waste and pollution
2. Circulate products and materials
3. Where feasible, value add to our resource streams

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

EXHIBITION WASTE

In order to achieve the 100% diversion from landfill target, we are working more closely with our suppliers to remove problematic waste materials from all areas of our business, including exhibition construction and packaging materials.

Avoiding waste to landfill requires waste resources to be diverted to a composting, recycling or waste to energy stream. The materials that do not have an established stream can end up in landfill. Examples of problematic materials and appropriate alternatives are outlined in the table below.

Problem materials	Use me instead
Black soft plastic packaging, commonly used to wrap exhibition stand crates – all other colours, except for black are accepted by soft plastic recyclers.	Plastic may not be required to wrap timber crates, consider avoiding plastic packaging. Cardboard – recyclable and reusable. Clear soft plastic packaging.
The combination of paper and clear soft plastic packaging, often seen where paper signs are sticky taped to packaging plastic.	Remove paper signs from soft plastic materials. Plastic may not be required to wrap timber crates. Consider avoiding plastic packaging. Cardboard – recyclable and reusable.
Medium Density Fibre (MDF) Board	Recycled paper alternatives, such as Eco Board.
Plastic or PVC foamboard signs	Eco Board signs made from paper-based materials are 100% recyclable. Digital signage.

Problem materials

Event or exhibitor branded merchandise, such as plastic pens, notepads, beer stubby holders, satchels/bags and water bottles. Event and exhibitor branded materials are a problem waste stream as many charities and not-for-profit organisations will not accept branded materials, and there is not an established waste stream for many merchandise materials.

HOW STAND DESIGNERS AND BUILDERS CAN REDUCE WASTE TO LANDFILL

Stand designers and builders can reduce waste to landfill in the following ways:

- Design stands for reuse and disassembly. Ensure stands are resilient, able to be constructed and deconstructed for use over multiple events.
- Utilise materials that can withstand construction, deconstruction and travel.
- Design modular stands, whereby any damaged parts can be isolated, removed and/or replaced.
- Choose reusable and recyclable materials for stand builds. Stands made from reusable materials have a longer lifespan and can be used across multiple events.
- Choose recyclable packaging to transport stand materials. Materials such as cardboard are recyclable and renewable.
- Select sustainable and ethical suppliers and materials, such as Forest Stewardship Certified timber.
- Avoid use of problematic waste packaging, such as black soft plastic packaging, which currently does not have an established recycling pathway.
- Speak to your suppliers about product stewardship and take-back schemes.
- Prioritise alternatives to MDF Board, a non-recyclable product.

Use me instead

Digital brochures and giveaways.

Compostable products, such as sow and grow seed kits, plantable business cards, bamboo tea infusers or sprout pencils.

Consumable products utilising compostable packaging – coffee served in compostable cups is popular.



Pictured: Example of Eco Board signage at Adelaide Convention Centre

STEPS ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE IS TAKING TO REDUCE EXHIBITION WASTE TO LANDFILL

We have established partnerships with a range of organisations to ensure that we are increasing the longevity and value of the materials received at Adelaide Convention Centre. Following are just some of the processes undertaken to keep products and materials in use for longer periods of time.

- Polluter pays fee – A flat \$530 fee is charged to clients and exhibitors who leave waste at Adelaide Convention Centre following completion of their event. We work with all clients and contractors to communicate the need to remove waste from the venue. The \$530 fee is only on-charged, if and when, waste is not collected in a timely manner.
- Timber pallets – Many products sent to Adelaide Convention Centre travel via timber pallets. Leftover pallets are collected and donated to a pallet furniture manufacturer, who utilises the materials to create beautiful timber furniture.
- Partnering with not-for-profit organisations – Non-event or exhibitor branded products and materials that are left behind after the completion of events are donated to Lions Groups.
- Collaborating with event organisers – Working with event organisers to reduce waste to landfill through communicating our strategic sustainability targets and the ways in which we help to reduce waste to landfill.



Pictured: Timber pallets are repurposed for furniture and clear plastics are recycled

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