The best way to organise your activity around how you manage your responsible actions is to group them under the following categories - INPUTS, OUTPUTS and IMPACTS. This way you can easily think of all the different environmental actions you need to take and how you can reduce their negative impacts and your cafe costs. The following pages give you some tips and tricks to consider on each of these categories:
Reducing your cafe's energy consumption can directly increase revenue without the need to increase sales – which will be more important than ever with rising energy prices.

**General Examples**

- Reduce idle time for all equipment by shutting it down during off peak and after hours. Perhaps invest in a timer for your coffee machine so it turns on before you open up!
- Make sure your equipment has most efficient Energy Star Rating including refrigerators, ovens, freezers, etc.
- Clean and service all equipment regularly.
- Use the most efficient appliances for your cooking needs ie ovens are typically more efficient than rotisseries and griddles more efficient than broilers.
- Use appropriately sized equipment for your needs and try to cook in large batches.
- Only run dishwashers when full and shorten drying times and use heat generated by dishwasher to dry contents.

**Refrigeration**

- Set refrigerators to the appropriate temperature because over cooling wastes energy and money.
- Minimise opening refrigerator and chiller doors.
- Install automatic door closers on all refrigerators.
- Make sure you are using your fridges/freezes to their capacity and not keeping one's on that are not needed.
- Check door seals every 6 months and replace if damaged, leaking or cracked.
- Schedule regular maintenance and cleaning for all refrigerators, including cleaning coils and ensuring refrigerant levels are correct.

**Lighting**

- Lighting upgrades can be relatively straightforward and offer quick returns on investment, ongoing operational savings, and reduced maintenance.
- Remove unnecessary lighting and switch off lights when not in use and make better use of daylight.
- Replace lighting with more efficient types.
- Install lighting control systems (ie switches, sensors, programmable solutions).

Ref: NSW Business Chamber - Sustainability Toolkit
There are plenty of water saving opportunities and efficiency measures that will save you money and help Australia conserve its valuable water resources. Reducing wastewater will also save you on energy bills as hot water requires significant amounts of energy to create.

**General Examples**

- Look for water devices labelled under the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Scheme (WELS), with 6 stars being the highest ranking.
- Place signage in kitchen reminding staff to conserve water and report leaks.
- Check larger water boiler units for leaks, look out for the overflow valve – it is often hidden.
- Switch off hot water heaters at night, install timer if necessary.
- Sweep or mop floors instead of using a hose.
- Repair leaks right away to avoid wasted water and money.
- Don’t thaw food under running water, instead be organised and put food in the fridge to thaw overnight.
- Garbage disposal units use about 6 litres of water per day so put suitable scraps into a composter rather than down the sink.
- Install a rainwater harvesting system to collect rainwater from roofs and then use it in your toilets and garden.

**Dishwasher**

- Dishwashers are the highest consumer of water in most kitchens so only run them when full and set to the economy or efficiency setting.
- Scrape excess food off before loading dishes.
- If possible install flow control to the rinse line.

**Bathroom**

- Install dual flush toilets, 4.5-6L cisterns with a half flush (3L) option.
- Check for signs of any leaks and get them fixed.
- If toilets are connected directly to a flush valve (that is, no cistern) then ensure flush is 5 seconds or less.
- Install WELS efficient mixer taps (combined hot and cold) with a flow rate of 6L/min and an aerated flow.
- Check tap flow rates – more than 10L/min are high flow, wasting unnecessary water.
- Whilst sensor taps appear good, they need to switch off within 6 seconds, but generally they waste more water than manual taps.
- Check hot water temperature has not been set too high.

Ref: NSW Business Chamber - Sustainability Toolkit
INPUTS: SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

It’s important to consider the lifecycle of all materials you bring into your café. As the consumer in the chain, be sure to consider the use and end of life options for each material.

Packaging and containers

There are so many packaging and container options available to cafes. Here are a few preferred plant-based items:

- commercially compostable packaging (this means it must be returned to a commercial composting unit to decompose).
- home compostable packaging (this means it can decompose in a home postposting unit).
- biodegradable bags, boxes and containers.
- recyclable cutlery and straws.
- packaging made from recycled material of biowaste.

Cleaning products

Look into chemical free cleaning products! Conventional cleaning products are bad for the environment because they contain microbeads, the small particles contained inside the detergents or cleansing waters, that pollute and harm the waterways and landfills.

Also try and find a product in large containers that you can decant or order refills in to avoid more plastic!

Building materials and design

- Glazing or special coating on windows can prevent heat and provide insulation and thermal comfort.
- heat reflective paints or lighter paint shades on exterior and interior walls can reflect back 80% of solar radiation.
- review light fittings and bulbs that use less energy.
- recycled wood, bamboo, and cork are always better than plastic in terms of sustainability and café ambiance.
- if you use upholstery fabric, choose wool or cotton as man-made synthetics can harm the environment.
- plants and green indoor wall creepers help bring life into your café and strengthen your connection to the natural world.
- if you do have space outside, landscape in a way that requires minimal maintenance and water and creating an environment that allows local plants and wildlife to flourish.
- remember that once your café is built, its ongoing maintenance costs are an important factor. a café that’s been designed with sustainability in mind—i.e. using passive design elements and sustainable materials, fixtures and fittings such as solar panels - will have lower ongoing maintenance costs due to reduced reliance on artificial light or climate control.
The waste hierarchy is a set of priorities for the efficient use of resources. There are many versions but we recommend using the one from the Australian Government’s National Food Waste Strategy as shown.

The highest order principle is AVOID which makes the point that the most sustainable and best value product is the one you don’t buy. Then as you work your way down the hierarchy there are a range of principles to guide your waste management activity.

For food waste that can’t be prevented or reduced please consider donating, off site composting or recycling options. These options depend on your location, how much waste you have and whether you can find strategic partners who deliver these services. Ring your council to see what services they offer or ask them if they know of preferred service providers in your area.

**OUTPUTS: ZERO WASTE**

**Spoilage waste – food damaged or spoiled before being prepared for customers**
- Always check stock levels before you place an order
- Label and date all supplies as they arrive
- Rotate stock in order to use up older items first
- Salvage aging fruit and vegetables by making jams and preserves

**Preparation waste - offcuts, spills or food spoiled during cooking or preparation**
- Develop daily production plans to minimise over-prepping food that will then be wasted
- Try to use nose-to-tail and root-to-fruit techniques
- Create Chef Specials to use up items that will go off soon

**Plate waste – any food left on a customers’ plate**
- Offer a range of portion options
- Offer side dishes ie salads as options or on request
- Offer to leave out foods customers don’t like
- Offer takeaway containers

**Surplus waste – food prepared but not sold**
- Remove unpopular dishes from the menu
- Have end of day specials

**General waste – food packaging and materials**
- Implement recycling by providing ample bins (ie glass, plastic)
- Compost organic waste and consider using a worm farm onsite
- Purchase products with minimal or reusable packaging
- Buy in bulk with low packaging, this will reduce packaging, transport and disposal costs
- Have cooking oils and fats collected for reprocessing and reuse
- Require suppliers to take back packaging, crates and pallets for reuse
- Onsite digesters or dehydrators to process food waste into energy or fertilisers

Ref: Love Food Hate Waste - Sustainability Victoria
Managing your greenhouse carbon is not just good for the environment, it’s also a way to save money, cut risks, and create new business opportunities.

When we look at a café using 100kg of roasted coffee per week, we see that it produces about 6 tonnes of CO2e per week. This is the equivalent of 57 cars travelling their average weekly distance. The relative contribution of the different sources of material and energy streams is shown in diagram.

Therefore, if a café wants to tackle their greenhouse emissions they could start by reducing their electricity use and lowering their milk consumption.

Check out our Complete Guide to not Mylking the Planet Dry. [here](#).

Ref: Seven Miles Café Sustainability: More than disposable cups
Different food types create different environmental issues. For instance, meat production produces a lot of greenhouse emissions which is why many people are switching to a plant-based diet.

Tips and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions:

- The first step to reducing emissions is knowing how much carbon your business emits. There are a number of carbon calculators. Try this one - carbonneutral.com.au
- Aim to move toward carbon neutrality – just like waste zero carbon is a great goal – but positive impact through offsetting is even better.
- Reduce energy consumption as a minimum.
- Choose renewable energy options – ask you supplier about their options.
- Invest in carbon offsets and fund a project that reduces GHG – be sure to purchase from a supplier with transparent processes.
- Reduce food waste and investigate milk alternatives.
- Refrigerators and air conditioning units release harmful chemicals and greenhouse gases that damage the atmosphere so seek out environmentally friendly alternatives. And when your refrigerator has reached the end of its life choose to dispose or recycle it responsibly.
IMpacts: biodiversity & land

So you may be thinking what difference can I make through my cafe actions - well there’s a lot and if we don’t act it could affect your business in the long run.

Climate change, soil erosion, pollinators extinction and deforestation are some of the greatest threats to food supplies. Did you know that 60% of coffee varieties are in danger of extinction. If this were to happen, global coffee markets, with retail sales of $83 billion in 2017, would be significantly destabilised, not only impacting the livelihoods of many coffee farmers but also businesses along the coffee chain of service and consumption.

This means that your choice of coffee supplier will make a difference to global biodiversity. Unfortunately, according to the World Economic Forum, certified sustainable coffee is only about 8% of the global coffee market. The vast majority of coffee is produced in monoculture farms with few or no shade trees, which harbor minimal biodiversity and are a cause of rainforest deforestation. Additionally, intensive-sun coffee farms can face pollination and pest problems, increasing reliance on pesticides and further perpetuating ecological degradation. So next time you speak to your coffee supplier ask them about “shade grown” and “bird friendly” coffee.

Tips and strategies to reduce your impact on biodiversity

- Choose your food supplies wisely and source them from farmers and producers that are committed to good agricultural practices.
- Offer more organically grown produce items as these are grown without the use of harmful fertilisers.
- Use recycled paper products as this helps global deforestation efforts.
- Grow your own food without using chemicals and pesticides.
- Plant a variety of flowers in your garden to promote our immune systems and to maintain bee populations and the making of local honey products.
- Get involved with ecological restoration in your areas near your cafe.
1. **Start a Kitchen Garden**
   Growing your own food reduces your food miles and CO₂ emissions. It also helps to create green spaces, foster better understanding of what it takes to grow food and provides access to seasonal produce.

2. **Reduce Waste & Start Composting**
   Australian businesses throw away more than 1 million tonnes of food every year! If you’re a food service operator, the Wise Up on Waste toolkit can help prevent food waste while reducing costs and improving sustainability. Secondly, you can separate organic waste and arrange a collection service so that you divert it from landfill.

3. **Avoid Packaging, Buy in Bulk**
   Every piece of plastic we’ve ever used is still on the planet today and 50% of it is used just once.
   Work with suppliers to reduce packaging by requesting that produce be delivered in reusable or returnable containers, free from plastic wrapping.
   - Stop serving straws with every drink
   - Swap disposable napkins for cloth ones
   - Ditch single serve sauce, butter, soy sauce, salt, pepper, you name it!

4. **Donate Leftover Food**
   Donate leftover food to a Food Rescue Charity or contact Yume App for creative solutions to addressing food waste.
   theyumeapp.com

5. **Buy Chemical Free, Organic or Biodynamic**
   Biodynamic farming methods improve soil health and reduce reliance on fossil fuels as no synthetic chemicals or pesticides are used.

6. **Buy Local & Seasonal**
   Support local farmers either directly or through your supplier. This supports biodiversity, reduces your carbon footprint, supports regional communities and educates your customers on seasonal eating.

7. **Increase Vegetarian and Dairy-Free Options on the Menu**
   The impact livestock production has on climate change has been estimated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation at 14% of human-caused global greenhouse gas emissions. Meat and dairy free options on the menu can help reduce Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions and provide customers with more choice. Promoting meat-free Mondays is another initiative which can reduce emissions.

8. **Choose Free Range Pork, Chicken & Eggs**
   Sustainably managed free range or organic farms are able to reduce or better manage the environmental impacts of farming by following a number of ecological practices such as appropriate animal stocking densities and integrated farming. Choose free range or organic and help support environmentally sound and more humane farming systems.

9. **Choose Sustainably Farmed Meat & Dairy & Sustainable Seafood**
   Sustainable meat and dairy farms employ good environmental practices such as animal rotation, pasture feeding (as opposed to grain feeding), water recycling and management, composting, tree planting and soil health practices, and use fewer non-renewable resources. Ask questions of your supplier and use the websites on the Sustainable Table (sustainabletable.org.au) or Local Harvest (localharvest.org.au) websites to find sustainably farmed meat and dairy close to you.
   Three quarters of the world’s oceans are officially over-exploited or fished right to their limit. Two great resources for choosing sustainable seafood are:
   - sustainableseafood.org.au
   - goodishbadish.com.au

10. **Develop Relationships & Ask Questions**
    Asking questions of your produce suppliers and decision makers is an important step in promoting positive change. Your questions demonstrate demand for sustainable food and encourage changes in the supply chain.
SIMPLE CHECKLIST TO GET YOU KICKSTARTED!

There is loads of information to digest here! Use this simple checklist to tackle some of these actions. Remember - Rome wasn’t built in a day and the years of ingrained behaviour won’t change over night so try and tackle some of these steps over time and track your progress!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLE ACTION</th>
<th>✓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a waste audit (see link in resources page).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review your power bills and see if you are getting good value for money and if your supplier will offset for you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change light bulbs to low energy and install timers to turn off your coffee machine every night - this can save you up to $400/quarter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact local council to see if they have any energy saving initiatives or grants for small biz.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up a composting system in the kitchen and find a supplier that will take it away or set up a bin in the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check your water pipes and install dual flush toilets, 4.5-6L cisterns with a half flush (3L) option.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLE ACTION</th>
<th>✓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check your power supplier and see if offsetting could be an option for you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check where you coffee comes from and see if you can source a local supplier that is fairtrade.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install a milk tap to reduce plastic packaging and waste.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask your fruit and veg supplier to deliver in packaging that can reused and given back to them for the next delivery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check for local suppliers that don’t have to travel far to deliver produce.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green your cafe up with some new plants connecting your customers to nature.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USEFUL RESOURCES AND LINKS

**How to conduct a waste audit info:**

**Cutting down you energy and bills calculator:**
- [https://cityswitch.net.au/Portals/0/CitySwitch%20Toolkits/CS-TK_Lighting_v2.pdf](https://cityswitch.net.au/Portals/0/CitySwitch%20Toolkits/CS-TK_Lighting_v2.pdf)

**Cafe examples**
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WU5-suAzlul&ab_channel=HuskeeCup](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WU5-suAzlul&ab_channel=HuskeeCup)
WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR BRAND PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

HAVE ANY QUESTION OR WANT TO CONTINUE YOUR TRAINING? CONTACT US hello@Responsiblecafes.org