Bass Coast Positive Impact and Sustainable Event Guide



EVENTS BASS COAST

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bunurong as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters, and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and Lore. We celebrate the opportunity to embrace and empower the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Communities in their diversity. We will create opportunities for future recognition and respectful partnerships that will honour the Traditional Owners and Custodians, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



About This Guide

The Bass Coast Positive Impact and Sustainable Event Guide supports event organisers to deliver events that create meaningful benefits for our environment, community and local economy.

It provides practical guidance across waste, accessibility, cultural respect, sustainability, economic contribution and community partnerships - helping you minimise negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes throughout the event lifecycle.



Cultural Respect & First Nations Engagement

To foster meaningful engagement with the Traditional Owners of Bass Coast, event organisers are encouraged to consider including a Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony or other cultural ceremony delivered by a Bunurong Elder or Traditional Owner.

Ceremonies and cultural experiences such as Didgeridoo performances, cultural talks and guided walks can be arranged through the Bunurong Land Council.

For bookings and current pricing, visit: www.bunuronglc.org



Waste Wise Events

Reducing waste is one of the most effective ways to minimise environmental impact. Events should follow the Waste Hierarchy:

Avoid → Reduce → Reuse → Recycle → Dispose (last resort)



A. Design a Low-Waste Event

- Plan sustainability into your event from the start
- Avoid single-use items wherever possible
- Use reusable crockery, cutlery and tableware – wash trailers are available for hire in Victoria
- Encourage BYO cups and water bottles
- Partner with vendors who minimise packaging
- Provide clearly labelled recycling, landfill and organics stations
- Conduct a post-event waste review or audit
- Seek support from Council's Waste Education Officer

B. Waste Choices – Practical Examples

- Plastic bottles: Provide water stations; encourage reusable bottles
- Food packaging: Choose reusable options or recyclable PET/cardboard. Avoid PLA compostables
- Coffee cups: Promote BYO cups or use mug libraries. Compostable cups with aqueous linings go in home compost or landfill
- Bags: Encourage BYO, or offer reusable or paper bags
- Condiments: Use bulk dispensers, not single-serve packets
- Straws: Eliminate unless required for medical needs
- Balloons: Avoid and use alternatives like bubbles or bunting

C. Council Requirements

- Please refer to Bass Coast Event Management Guide
- A Waste Management Plan is required via the Event Permit Application
- Event organisers may be required to arrange street cleaning and waste services in accordance with their waste management plan
- Council's single-use plastic-free policy applies to events and stallholders
- Waste trailers and CDS bins may be available upon request
- Bass Coast Shire Council has a single-use plastic-free policy for events, vendors and stallholders

Nature Recovery Foundation

The Nature Recovery Foundation is being established by Bass Coast Shire Council in partnership with Biodiversity Legacy to support habitat restoration across Bass Coast.

With only 15% of native vegetation remaining, the Foundation will focus on:

- Tree planting
- Habitat restoration
- Protecting and purchasing land for conservation

While donations are not yet open, future opportunities may allow event organisers and ticket holders to contribute to local nature recovery initiatives. In the meantime, we are encouraging the community to learn about and support nature recovery efforts.



Accessibility & Inclusion

Inclusive events ensure everyone can participate safely and comfortably, regardless of ability, age, language or background.

Venue & Physical Access

- Ensure accessible entrances, ramps, wide doors, and level thresholds
- Provide accessible parking and drop-off zones near entrances
- Maintain clear, uncluttered pathways inside and outside the venue
- Provide accessible restrooms (grab rails, transfer space, appropriate sink heights)
- Use clear, high-contrast signage (large type, braille, tactile systems)
- Consider quiet spaces, lowered service desks, and alternative seating options for attendees with mobility or sensory needs

Digital Accessibility

- Follow WCAG Checklist 2.1 AA and 2.2 AA | Accessible.org
  - Guidelines for event websites and booking platforms
- Make text resizable without breaking layout; avoid flashing or flickering content
- Clear consistent navigation with skip to content links and easy to find "Book Here" or "Menu" links

Supporting Attendees

- Train event staff and volunteers on disability awareness, respectful communication, and etiquette
- Offer multiple ways for attendees to interact in person, phone, chat, email
- Communicate accessibility details in advance (e.g., ramps, lifts, seating options, quiet spaces)

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Organiser Practices

- Embed accessibility and equity into event planning and strategy
- Conduct accessibility audits of the venue and event activities
- Develop an accessibility roadmap: assess → plan → implement → monitor
- Budget for accessibility improvements (e.g. ramps, signage, assistive technology)
- Foster an inclusive culture among staff, volunteers, and vendors; encourage feedback and respond promptly to accessibility concerns



Community & Environmental Contribution

Events can amplify their positive impact by supporting local conservation, volunteering and community initiatives.

Support eco-friendly businesses while enjoying local experiences:

- Wildlife Coast Cruises – Sustainable Tourism
  - Beach & Coastal Clean-Ups

Get involved in protecting local waterways and coastlines:

- Ocean Watch Australia
  - Beach clean-ups and marine conservation
- Clean Up Australia – National community clean-up initiatives
  - Landcare & Habitat Restoration

Volunteer to support local habitats and biodiversity:

- Bass Coast Landcare – Tree planting, weeding, harvesting, and general maintenance
  - Wildlife Conservation

Contribute to protecting native species and ecosystems:

- Adopt a Penguin – Penguin Foundation
  - Your donation funds research, conservation, education programs, and wildlife rescue/rehabilitation on Phillip Island
  - Volunteer & Tourism Campaigns

Support local conservation while visiting:

- Love Phillip Island – Give Back This Summer
  - Volunteer opportunities and awareness of local projects including Penguin Foundation initiatives
  - Citizen Science & Research

Participate in scientific monitoring and biodiversity projects:

- Island Whales – Citizen Science Programs
- Coastal Botany & Backyard Botany
- Parks Victoria



Sustainable Tourism Accreditation

Sustainable tourism accreditation provides structured, independently verified standards for environmental, cultural and social responsibility.

In Australia, the Quality Tourism Framework (VTIC/ATIC) provides nationally recognised accreditation pathways. Globally, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) sets international benchmarks.

Benefits include:

- Market recognition and credibility with eco-conscious travellers
- Stronger sustainability practices
- Access to resources, guidance and promotional support

Accreditation helps businesses demonstrate their commitment to sustainable tourism while attracting responsible visitors and supporting long-term environmental and community goals.



Case Studies

Hills Are Alive Group – Tree Planting Project

- An environmental sustainability initiative aiming to plant tens of thousands of indigenous trees across regional Victoria in the coming years
- Learn more

Kilcunda Lobster Festival

- Volunteer-run community event
- Guided waste stations achieving zero contamination
- Refillable water stations
- Reusable lobster delivery containers
- Lobster Festival - Kilcunda Community Association Inc.
- (KCA) www.kilcunda.org.au

Island Whale Festival

- Celebrates whales and the natural environment as the central focus
- Incorporates sustainability practices throughout the festival to protect marine life and ecosystems
- Learn more

Wildlife Coast Cruises

- Continuously evolves its sustainability practices across operations
- Promotes education, conservation, and awareness about marine life and ecological impacts
- Encourages responsible tourism and environmentally conscious practices for all visitors
- Learn more



Supporting the Local Economy

Positive impact also includes strengthening the local visitor economy.

Surfing Victoria – Rip Curl Gromsearch Phillip Island Passport

- Passport program given to 190 competitors to encourage spending at 20 local businesses including retail, cafes, restaurants, attractions, and hotels
- Competitors visit businesses, make purchases, and collect stamps

Completed passports are submitted online, and each stamp enters competitors into a draw to win a Rip Curl Prize Pack. Supports local economy while engaging youth in sustainable tourism activities.



Sustainability for Events

Food & Beverages

- Lower-impact options: Prioritise local and seasonal food and provide more plant-based options
- Order accurately: Minimise waste by planning portions for your guest numbers.
- Reusables: Use returnable cups, eco lunch boxes, and reusable cutlery/crockery; consider hiring a portable dishwasher trailer
- Condiments: Avoid single-serve packets; provide bulk dispensers
- Local vendors: Prioritise suppliers offering seasonal produce options

Water

- Hydration: Provide water coolers, carafes, or refill stations
- Single-use reduction: Don't sell bottled water; encourage attendees to bring refillable bottles and keep cups
- Exhibitor support: Ask exhibitors to avoid non-recyclable items and bottled water
- Toilets: Consider low-water or composting options

Energy

- Plan ahead: Minimise energy use during the event
- Renewable energy: Choose venues powered by clean energy
- Emerging technologies: Explore options like electric generators or EVs for event logistics

Transport

- Sustainable travel: Encourage walking, cycling, or public transport
- Carpooling: Promote sharing rides among attendees
- Provide bike parking
- Share public transport routes and timetables on event promotional material



Contact & Support

We're here to help you deliver events in Bass Coast that are safe, successful and create a lasting positive impact for our community and environment.

Contact Council's Visitor Economy and Events Team
events@basscoast.vic.gov.au
1300 BCOAST (226 278) or (03) 5671 2211
basscoast.vic.gov.au/explore/planning-an-event

