



MASTERING FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR VENUE MANAGERS

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Why food waste matters for your venue

As sustainability takes centre stage in Australia, hospitality venues face increasing regulations to cut down on food waste, with the industry discarding **4.6 million meals every day**¹.

Meeting these requirements does more than keep you compliant – it helps cut costs, build customer trust, and show leadership in sustainable hospitality.

Understanding organics recycling mandates

Australia has committed to [halving food waste by 2030](#), with each state implementing specific measures to meet this target:

New South Wales: Mandatory [Food Organics and Garden Organics \(FOGO\) recycling](#) for businesses and institutions from July 2026.

Victoria: Introducing mandatory organics recycling as part of its Recycling Victoria policy, with other states following suit.



In some states, fines for non-compliance can reach up to \$50,000 – a cost no venue can afford to ignore.

The business case for reducing food waste



Enhance your venue's reputation

Customers are choosing venues that align with their values. Showcasing your sustainability efforts can build loyalty and attract eco-conscious diners.



Reduce operational costs

The cost of general waste disposal is significant with some states charging over \$450 per tonne, depending on the state, facility and type of general waste. Food waste reduction strategies can help you save on both disposal and ingredient costs.



Make a positive environmental impact

When food waste decomposes in landfill, it produces 28X more methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than CO₂. Diverting organic waste from landfill through improved practices and recycling reduces emissions and supports a healthier planet.

Five effective strategies to cut food waste in your venue



Smarter menu and portion planning.

- Create dishes that share ingredients to minimise excess stock
- Use seasonal, locally sourced produce to improve freshness and reduce spoilage
- Monitor plate waste and adjust portion sizes accordingly



Optimised inventory management

- Use a First-in, First-out (FIFO) system to ensure older stock is used first. Train staff on how to follow this system
- Clearly label all items with specific use-by dates and organise storage by category to reduce spoilage
- Digitise inventory tracking with apps or POS-integrated software to track stock levels and monitor expiry dates to prevent over-ordering
- Order ingredients on demand rather than in bulk to reduce waste



Engage your team and celebrate success

- Educate staff on the financial and environmental impacts of food waste. Reward and celebrate successes
- Set venue-wide waste reduction targets and track progress
- Assign 'Food Waste Champions' to lead and ensure correct recycling practices are maintained



Implement an organics recycling system

- Partner with local composting services, arrange a council FOGO or set up on-site composting. Dehydrators are an organic processing machine that could be used to reduce waste volume and disposal costs
- Provide training and clear signage throughout the venue and beside all bins to encourage recycling and prevent contamination
- Ensure bins are conveniently placed close to food waste hotspots such as prep stations and dishwashers, and are easy for staff to use. Ensure messaging and language is inclusive and suits diverse teams



Continuously monitor and improve

- Request regular reports from your waste service provider to track progress and reveal opportunities for improvement
- Share success stories and celebrate staff contributions to waste reduction. Consider promoting your impact via a statement on menus, on your socials or through FOH communications to engage customers
- Stay up to date on the latest sustainability trends and best practices and visit the R&CA portal to see what other businesses are doing

Resources

The resources below offer practical guidance, tools, and partnership opportunities to help your venue meaningfully reduce food waste.



[Waste and Recycling at Events and Venues](#) (SA Government). Practical guidance to design an effective waste management strategy at events and venues.



[Waste and Recycling Reporting Template](#) (SA Government) to help businesses track and report their waste and recycling data.



[Reduce Food Waste Toolkit](#) (QLD Government), including audit forms and bin labels.



[Love Food Hate Waste](#) (NSW EPA) features a six-week program to reduce waste in the hospitality industry and business case studies.



[National Food Waste Strategy](#) (Australian Government) outlines Australia's commitment to halving food waste by 2030 with valuable insights for the hospitality sector.



Discover a range of food waste and recycling organisations including [End Food Waste Australia](#), [OzHarvest](#), and [Envirobank](#).

Support Services

R&CA is Australia's voice for the hospitality industry, and advocates for the food waste movement.

[Membership is available here](#), giving you access to training and education, policy and advocacy, and workplace relationship support.

Contact R&CA

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