

## What is sustainable business?

Sustainable businesses are prepared for the future because they:

- Create long-term financial viability.
- Understand how their actions affect the natural environment and work towards reducing these impacts.
- Value their ties to others – for example, employees and community – and contribute to positive social change.

## How can sustainability benefit your business?

Business sustainability can create a more resilient business, ensuring you are better able to adapt to change.

Sustainability can have financial, environmental and social benefits that strengthen business. Benefits include saving money, managing business risks and maintaining stronger relationships with employees, customers, the local community and other businesses.

## Where can you start?

From micro to large, each business can reinforce their position as a responsible member of the business community. You don't need to achieve all-the-things right away! Businesses can take simple, achievable steps to become more sustainable, implementing quick wins or deep changes.

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## QUICK WINS

### Energy

- Let buildings stay slightly warmer in the summer and cooler in the winter, to reduce energy use – and bills. Using LED lights will also reduce energy use.

### Waste & Pollution

- Implement a recycling program to reduce waste and disposal costs.
- Join the [CHCC Compost Revolution](#).
- As NSW moves to cut single-use plastics by 2025 – get prepared with [Bye Bye Plastic](#).
- For hospitality businesses, cutting food waste can be the best way to save money and boost business profits. Head to [MidWaste](#) and learn more about their free food waste program [Your Business Is Food](#).

## DEEP CHANGES

### Energy

- Evaluate your usage. Energy costs can be a major strain on your bottom line. Get to know what's using the most energy. Head to the [Energy Saver NSW](#) website and discover how to manage and monitor your electricity and gas usage.
- Learn how the [NSW Government](#) can guide your business towards a clean energy future.

### Waste & Pollution

- Take a deeper assessment of your business via the [business.gov.au](#) website, and learn [how to make your business more environmentally friendly](#).

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## QUICK WINS

### Community

- Inform community members in advance about changes that will affect them. They'll be more supportive – and may even contribute good ideas. This can be done via social media, newsletters or in-person.

### Employees & Supply Chains

- Engaging employees to create a sustainable business – involve everyone in day-to-day sustainability efforts. Make staff members the champions of various sustainable initiatives.

## DEEP CHANGES

### Community

- Work with the community on a project of mutual interest, to develop solutions that benefit your business and the community: eg. on-the-job training for students. Visit [Network for Business Sustainability](#) for resources on stakeholder engagement.

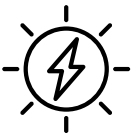
### Employees & Supply Chains

- Develop an ethical sourcing policy to ensure inputs are produced responsibly and support the local economy. This effort can draw new customers and strengthen relationships with suppliers. Visit [Network for Business Sustainability](#) for resources on supply chains.

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## Where to find more information

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[Business.gov.au](#) – find out how to reduce the amount of energy and water your business uses, and improve your waste management.

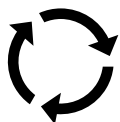
[Energy Saver NSW](#) – information on energy management, as well as access to offers that will help you upgrade your equipment at a lower cost.



[Bye Bye Plastic](#) – the time has come to say bye-bye to single use plastics. Get ready!

[MidWaste](#) – providing information, advice and resources to reduce the amount of food you throw away in your business.

[War on Waste Toolkit for Business](#) – essential tips and tools that can get your business reducing waste, saving money and improving staff morale.



[NSW Renewable Energy Investment](#) – the clean energy sector in NSW is thriving and our state enjoys many competitive advantages over other areas in building a clean energy future. How can your business be involved?

[Sustainability Advantage NSW](#) – sustainability advice for NSW medium to large businesses.

[CitySwitch](#) – a free program for medium and larger sized business to help reduce carbon emissions



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# Sustainability is Possible Small Green Steps



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Often the biggest barrier to sustainability for many business owners is “where do I start”. Sustainability can sometimes feel overwhelming, but it doesn’t need to be. [6 degrees](#) hosted Sustainability is Possible – ‘Small Green Steps’ on May 26 2022 to help businesses discover the ‘Small Green Steps’ needed to start (or boost) their sustainable business journey.

Guest speakers included Ian Moxon ([Australian Energy Foundation](#)), Ebony Johnson ([National Retail Association](#)), Chris Fraser ([Critters Distillery](#)) and Leanne Cheal (Coffs Coast Business Support Services). Participants were encouraged to ask questions to better understand how to reduce business waste, improve energy efficiencies or save money through sustainability.

The 6 degrees team captured what was said at the event which includes the following. Find links to additional information, organisations and toolkits on page 4.

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## Energy

### **Q. Does energy efficiency improve cash flow, if so, how?**

Yes! It isn’t uncommon for a small business to spend thousands on electricity bills every year. Saving on your bottom-line starts with avoidance – turning off electronic devices, upgrading to energy efficient appliances, use energy-efficient lighting and reduce peak demand times.

Consider solar energy and battery options for your business. By installing a battery your business could connect to a virtual power plant (VPP) which is a network of solar battery systems all working together in a coordinated way. And, your battery can actually sell electricity back to the network.

### **Q. Bang for buck, what’s the best ‘small green step’ a business can take to make a real difference?**

Changing over to energy efficiency lighting such as LEDs.

### **Q. I would like to install renewable energy systems for my business. Is there financial and/or technical support currently available from the Government?**

Not at the minute but that could change. The NSW Government’s Energy Saver program offers free training, online courses and webinars for small businesses seeking business energy advice. There are also discounts and incentives for businesses to reduce energy use including several schemes which provide subsidies for new appliances and equipment.

Learn more about feed-in tariff rates, installing solar, emerging technologies and other renewable energy benefits at the [NSW Government website](#).

Solar is the cheapest electricity available in today’s market. The return on investment you get from a solar system often exceeds most other assets in terms of the money your business saves over the years.

# Sustainability is Possible Small Green Steps



## Plastic Waste

### **Q. Bang for buck, what's the best 'small green step' a business can take to make a real difference?**

For retailers, stop giving things away for free! Do your customers really need a straw, do they really need cutlery or a bag? Introduce reusable products – reusable bags and cups.

### **Q. Do plastic-free coffee cups exist?**

Yes but be careful of greenwashing! Most takeaway coffee cups contain plastic or bioplastics. Because many companies are promoting them as recyclables, a huge volume of cups end up in yellow recycling bins, contaminating the rest of the recyclables.

### **Q. How do we recycle soft plastics?**

Soft plastics like shopping bags, packets and plastic wrap cannot be recycled in your yellow lidded bin. Unfortunately there are no local solutions to recycling soft plastics but we can do our bit in reducing the amount we use. Try avoiding unnecessary and single-use plastics, support businesses who are reducing plastic waste and re-use existing plastic. Households can recycle soft plastics by taking them to a RedCycle drop-off point. These can be found at local Coles and Woolworths supermarkets.

### **Q. Plastic bags will be banned from June 1... what other plastic products will be banned and when?**

The NSW ban includes:

- Banned from 1 June: lightweight plastic shopping bags with handles which are 35 microns or less.
- Banned from 1 November: single-use plastic straws, cutlery, stirrers, plates, unlidded bowls, EPS food containers. Some exemptions will apply.

### **Q. Are there any resources out there to help educate our customers about the up-coming plastic bans?**

Yes, the [NSW Government website](#) has many resources available for retailers, suppliers and not-for-profit organisations including posters, counter cards, guides and supplier advice.

# Sustainability is Possible

## Small Green Steps



## Other Waste

### What happens to my recycling here in Coffs Harbour?

General waste is sorted locally in Coffs Harbour. A significant amount of business waste is recyclable. It is estimated that up to 90% of business waste is recyclable, with the majority consisting of paper and cardboard followed by co-mingled recyclables and organic waste. You can achieve significant savings in waste costs through correct recycling. Roughly 10% of all recyclable materials are sent to landfill due to contamination.

### Q. Are there any coffee cup recycling options in Coffs Harbour?

Disposable cups can only be placed in red bins. This includes all cups marked biodegradable or compostable. Biodegradable and compostable coffee cups are a more responsible purchase but they cannot go into your green or yellow bin. Most disposable coffee cups are lined with plastic polyethylene and therefore cannot be recycled or composted. Cup lids are usually made from High Impact Polystyrene (HIPS). HIPS carries the plastics identification code #6 and is recyclable if it is separated and sent to a separate plastics collection system.

Bringing your own reusable cup is the best way to reduce coffee cup waste. Around one billion disposable coffee cups end up in Australian landfill every year. In landfill, the cardboard fibre of the cup releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

### Q. As a business, how can I save on my waste services?

Once you've got an understanding of your business waste, the '3 Rs' (Reduce, Reuse & Recycle) can help you to manage your waste better. Here are some tips to help your business to reduce, reuse and recycle waste materials.

- Introduce a waste reduction program – involve your staff by appointing a waste management coordinator to establish a waste reduction program and identify local recyclers.
- Separate the different types of waste – it's important to know what rubbish your business can recycle or reuse. Have separate bins for different types of waste.
- Review your products – consider the cost of disposing of materials compared to the cost of producing or buying them. Could your business use less packaging material, or better still, reuse or recycle?
- Buy green – talk to your suppliers about using environmentally friendly products, materials or services.

Reducing your business waste can be good for business.

## Sustainable Business

### Q. What are the best certification programs available for businesses?

[B Corp](#), [Sustainability Advantage NSW](#), [Ecotourism Australia's Eco Certification](#), [Green Power Label](#) and [Australasian Recycling Label](#) were discussed.

# Sustainability is Possible Small Green Steps



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## Where to find more information



**Business.gov.au** – find out how to reduce the amount of energy and water your business uses, and improve your waste management.

**Energy Saver NSW** – information on energy management, as well as access to offers that will help you upgrade your equipment at a lower cost.

**Australian Energy Foundation** – the leading for-purpose national energy foundation that collaborates with government, like-minded organisations and community groups.

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**Bye Bye Plastic** – the time has come to say bye-bye to single use plastics. Get ready!

**MidWaste** – providing information, advice and resources to reduce the amount of food you throw away in your business.

**War on Waste Toolkit for Business** – essential tips and tools that can get your business reducing waste, saving money and improving staff morale.

**Jasper Coffee, No More Plastic & Green Caffein** – plastic-free coffee cup solutions.



**RedCycle** – makes it easy for consumers to keep plastic bags and packaging out of landfill.

**National Retail Association** – single-use plastic bans explained.

**NSW Government (single-use plastic bans)** – resources for retailers, suppliers and not-for-profit organisations.

**Handybin Services** – Coffs Coast recycling information.

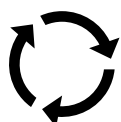
**Coffs Coast Waste Services** – biodegradable and compostable cup information.

**EPA Bin Trim** – a simple tool to help businesses measure their waste, and find out how to waste less and save more.

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**Sustainability Advantage NSW** – sustainability advice for NSW medium to large businesses.

**GECA, B-Corp & Ecotourism Australia** – sustainability solutions for planet and people.



**Responsible Returns** and **Bank Australia** – seek out ethical bank options for your business banking needs.

**Australian Government (Sustainable Procurement Guide)** – practical assistance on how to consider environmental sustainability and incorporate the use of recycled content into your procurement.