



Where to start can be a daunting decision when it comes to your sustainability journey. Just like any business decision, it is best to start with a plan so you can track your progress over time.

This factsheet covers:

- Developing a sustainability policy
- Measuring to manage
- Developing a risk assessment
- Creating an action plan
- Communicating your action
- Continuous improvement.

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

A sustainability policy, or commitment, can guide your future action. The policy should include the scope of your business (e.g. a café in a 250m² property, serving breakfast and lunch in Brisbane (Meeanjin), your priority commitments (e.g. waste reduction) and alignment to international (SDGs), national (net zero) and local (e.g. using local suppliers) sustainability outcomes.

It doesn't need to be any longer than a page, but provides guidance for where your sustainability action is prioritised. When developed, talk with your team to get their buy-in and use your policy as an outward sign of your commitment to do less harm and more good.

MEASURING TO MANAGE

You can't manage what you don't measure!

1. Register for the EarthCheck Calculator here: <https://register.earthcheck.org/?productid=39>
2. Following registration, login to your account here: <https://my.earthcheck.org/Session/Login>

Measuring your carbon footprint, energy and water consumption and waste production can also help you identify areas of your operations where you can reduce costs. For example, by tracking your energy consumption, you can identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency and reduce your utility bills. Similarly, by measuring your transportation emissions, you can identify opportunities to optimise your vehicle fleet and reduce your fuel costs. With rising energy costs and challenges with waste management, there is no better time to start managing your energy water and waste than now.

DEVELOPING A RISK ASSESSMENT

Developing a risk assessment required four key steps:

1. Identify the risk.
2. Assess the risk.
3. Respond to the risk.
4. Monitor, review & update.

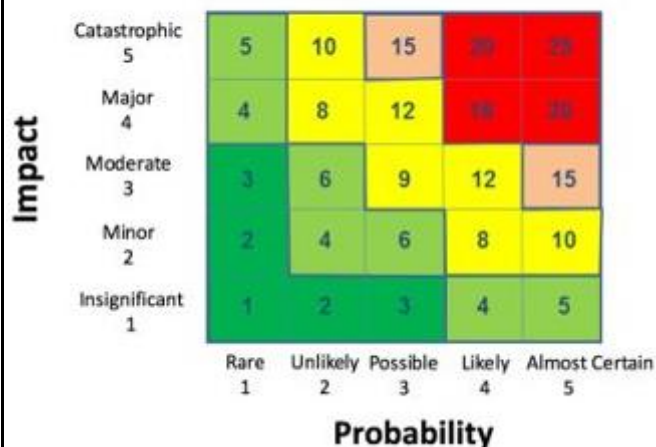


When identifying the risks consider using a table like this:

Hazard	Risk	Impact	Consequence	Current control	P	I	RS	Action
Lake	Flooding	Inundation of 12 sites	Inability to operate	Evacuation process	4	4	16	Landscaping of lake to reduce impact. Insurance on site.

Risk matrix

Probability (P)	Impact (I)
5: Almost certain (incident is expected to occur in most circumstances)	5: Catastrophic (business will cease)
4: Likely (The incident will probably occur in most circumstances)	4: Major (there will be a major impact on business)
3: Possible (The incident should occur at sometime)	3: Moderate (there will be some impact on business)
2: Unlikely (The incident could occur at some time)	2: Minor (business will be inconvenienced)
1: Rare (The incident may occur only in exceptional circumstances)	1: Insignificant (business will not be notably impacted)



Examine the probability (P) and Impact (I) and multiply the two numbers to create your risk status (RS). This will help you prioritise where you can take action.

Consider your major risks and identify options to reduce them where possible. If you can't reduce, transfer the risk through insurance.

CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

Your action plan should prioritise actions based on the data from your measurement and the greatest risks that you identify in your risk assessment. Consider what is required to achieve those outcomes, the financial and human resources available. The timeframe for implementation and who will lead the implementation.

Aspect	Objective	Target	Action	Responsibilities
Energy consumption	Reduce annual office energy consumption through change in lighting	5% reduction by December 2023	Change all lights to LED Communication to turn off lighting Promote natural light usage	Engineering HR HR

Some top actions to consider are outlined on our other factsheets but you may want to start with:

Energy

- Install timers / train staff to turn off power
- Upgrade / maintain your refrigeration equipment
- Use / maintain cooking equipment more efficiently
- Use dishwashers more efficiently (full loads)
- Upgrade to LED lighting
- Heat to 24oC in summer & 20oC in winter
- Invest in renewable energy or a green power agreement.

Water

- Low flow taps
- Aerated shower heads
- Low flow toilets
- Laundry efficiency
- Sub metre pools – watch for leaks
- Switch shrubbery to natives to reduce water needs
- Staff training (especially in kitchens)
- Upgrading dishwashers, ice machines, and steam cookers
- Ensure dishwashers are full
- Harvest grey water to irrigate grounds
- Only serve water to guests that ask – but tell them why.

Waste

- Survey your waste
- Divert from landfill – reduce, reuse, recycle
- Use the Container Deposit Scheme – donate funds to local charity (co-benefit)
- Ban single use plastics
- Take e-waste to a drop off point
- Join a program like Huskee or Green Caffeine
- Compost – or find a farm that will take your waste
- Analyse plate waste and work with Chefs to change portions or ingredients
- Reduce printing.

COMMUNICATION

Talking about your sustainability journey shouldn't be scary. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission published a set of draft guidelines to support businesses in making environmental and sustainability claims ([here](#)). They include:

1. Make accurate and truthful claims.
2. Have evidence to back up your claims (measure to manage).
3. Don't leave out or hide important information – give the full picture.

4. Explain the conditions or qualifications of your claim.
5. Avoid broad and unqualified claims.
6. Use clear and easy-to-use language.
7. Ensure your visual elements do not give the wrong impression.
8. Be direct and open about your sustainability journey.

When considering how you share your story think about:

- Audience – who you are talking to
- Ambition – setting and talking about your specific, measurable, achievable and timely goals
- Actions – being transparent about the action underway
- Amplification – sharing your stories far and wide.

Your story doesn't just deserve to be told in person at the experience. Use the whole visitor journey to talk about your ambitions and actions.

- Dreaming – use imagery of sustainable initiatives such as bike rental or plant based menus to inspire visitation.
- Planning – offer details on your website including your commitment or policy, your ambition and your roadmap to reach your goals.
- Booking – a last reminder of your sustainable initiatives to tip potential guests over the line.
- Experience – ensure that you walk the talk and deliver sustainable actions through your experience.
- Sharing – use your visitors to share your sustainability story with authenticity and transparency.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Sustainability is a journey not a single action or something that you can set and forget. Work to set yourself targets that evolve over time once you have completed them. Your targets should be SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound.

Keep yourself honest and work with your team and stakeholders to track and monitor progress over time. Don't be worried if you miss a target, identify what the barriers were and what you can do to move forward. This is where step 2 – measurement is so important – you can track your progress over time and identify which initiatives have supported your action and which didn't.

Once you have gone through all these stages, you may consider sustainable certification. This provides credibility to back up all your hard work. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What do you want to achieve through certification, and can the program offer you that?
2. Is the program credible – is it science-backed, requires and an independent audit?
3. Is it bankable – does it meet owner obligations and expectations?
4. Will it support you in progressing your sustainability journey?