

# NATIONAL CELTIC FESTIVAL

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ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT 2019

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**NATIONAL  
CELTIC  
FESTIVAL**  
AT PORTARLINGTON  
VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA





# **B-Alternative**

**Be the change. Be alternative.**

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B-Alternative wishes to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our team members work and live, predominantly lands belonging to the Wadawurrung, Woiworung and Boonwurrung people of the Kulin nation.

We wish to pay our respects now and always to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

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# ABOUT US



B-Alternative is a grassroots, environmental solutions group shaking things up at festivals, markets, schools and any event where the focus is shifting to a more sustainable, planet-positive future! We are based in Australia and are part of a global community of conservationists, environmentalists and change-makers.

We provide practical, eco-friendly solutions to everyday living by sourcing and supplying truly compostable products and packaging, raising awareness through facilitated environmentally focused conversation for schools and social events, and providing sustainable festival/event waste reduction services.

Our core pillars are **education**, **waste reduction**, and **Earth-friendly products**.

*" NEVER BEFORE HAVE WE HAD SUCH AN AWARENESS OF WHAT WE ARE DOING TO THE PLANET, AND NEVER BEFORE HAVE WE HAD THE POWER TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT "*

**- SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH**





## OVERVIEW + AIM

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In the summer of 2019, B-Alternative undertook an environmental audit of Portarlinton's National Celtic Festival as a proud event waste partner.

The aim was to decipher what quantity of various waste streams were being produced, separated, recycled, composted and landfilled after implementation of a reusable system and other waste-reduction methods. This in turn was used to interpret the overall impact of the event's environmental footprint.

Our target for National Celtic Festival was to maximise diversion from landfill in comparison to 2018's event. We utilised several models to assist us in achieving these results:

- Ensuring all vendors and patrons favoured our reusable crockery system, with 100% compostable packaging as a last resort back-up
- Organics composting and streamed resource recovery
- Utilising station-based staff to ensure there was minimal contamination at the point of rubbish disposal
- Having back-of-house environmental consultants to ensure our decontamination crew sort waste as efficiently and correctly as possible

BY PARTICIPATING IN THIS WASTE AUDIT, NATIONAL CELTIC FESTIVAL REVEALS ITS  
COMMITMENT TO A BETTER ENVIRONMENT, BOTH FOR EVENTS AND FOR THE NATURAL WORLD

# RESULTS

All waste streams collected and separated after the three days, then were weighed and recorded. A total of **830kg** was collected. General waste formed the largest part of the festival waste at 330kg, followed by cardboard at 240kg, then a small amount of recycled soft plastics and aluminium cans (see table 1, and chart 1).

These results are in stark contrast to 2018's event, and **overall waste was reduced by a huge 90%**! Of the minimal waste collected in 2019, **60% was able to be diverted from landfill**.

Resource/Waste Stream	Kg
Compost	175
General	330
Cardboard	240
Cans	35
Soft plastic to furniture	50

Table 1 - Waste streams by weight (kg) collected over three days at National Celtic Festival

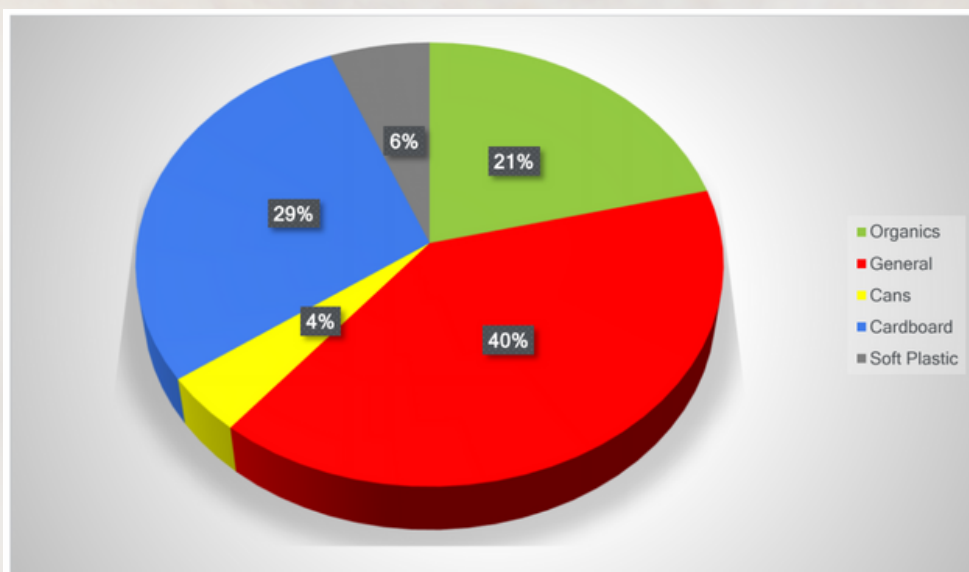


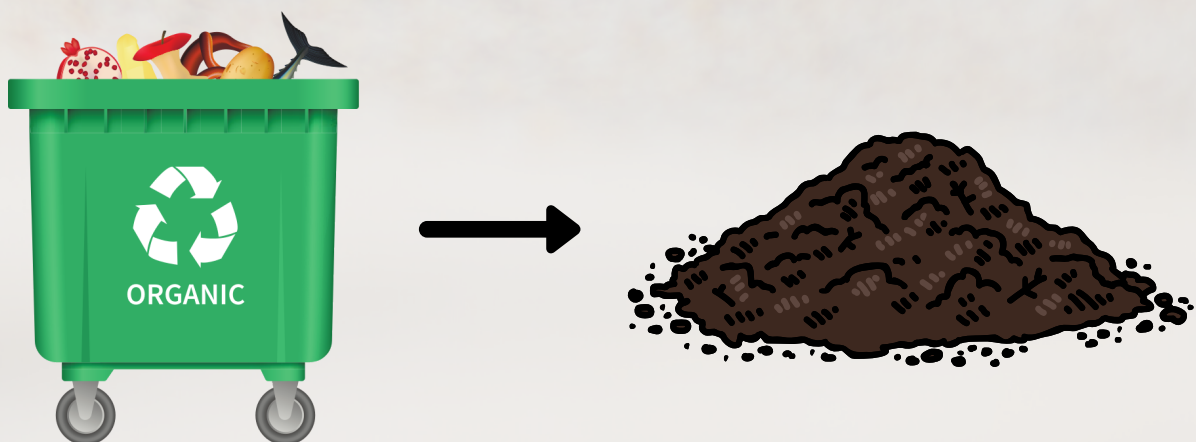
Chart 1 - Waste streams by % collected over three days at National Celtic Festival

# WHY COMPOST?

WHEN FOOD SCRAPS ARE SENT TO LANDFILL, THEY DECOMPOSE AND RELEASE METHANE ( $\text{CH}_4$ ) INTO THE ATMOSPHERE.



METHANE IS A GREENHOUSE GAS APPROXIMATELY 25 TIMES MORE POTENT THAN CARBON DIOXIDE ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO GLOBAL WARMING AND SPEEDS UP CLIMATE CHANGE.



BY COMPOSTING, A DIFFERENT CHEMICAL PROCESS TAKES PLACE, STOPPING METHANE FROM BEING RELEASED INTO THE ATMOSPHERE.

# DISCUSSION

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To achieve the results above, four primary methods were applied in cooperation with National Celtic Festival organisers, B-Alternative staff, volunteers, Bellarine Catchment Network, and waste contractors:

1. *Control of/reduction in the product stream into the festival* - By ensuring almost all vendors were on board with a reusable system for their products, and that patrons were happy to hire their own kit for their meals, we could eliminate an estimated four tonnes of packaging from the event.
2. *Bin station decontamination* - All bin stations at the festival were staffed by our 'bin fairies' who educate punters on correct bin use, reducing contamination. When bins were brought to back-of-house, they were 90-95% decontaminated, also saving time and labour.
3. *Back of house sorting and consulting* - We were able to further sort waste streams back-of-house, so there was no contamination upon tipping of bins into skips. It was imperative we had a consultant there to educate sorters on accuracy.
4. *Final check from Waste Management Company* - Corio Waste Management conducted a final check and decontamination (if any) of the compost taken away for maximum efficacy.

## RECYCLABLES

All soft plastics and aluminium cans to come out of National Celtic Festival were able to be bailed up and taken away where they were either recycled (aluminium) or upcycled into building materials (soft plastics). By utilising this model, all plastic that was destined for landfill was instead turned into a resource that could be used by people in future years, demonstrating a closed loop system.

## CARBON OFFSET

Minimising direct and indirect carbon output is something we always strive for when consulting for events. For the National Celtic Festival, the following initiatives were put in place to reduce the carbon dioxide and carbon dioxide equivalent released into the atmosphere. *Carbon dioxide equivalent describes how much global warming a given type of greenhouse gas may cause, using carbon dioxide as a reference. For example, methane has a global warming potential that is 25 times greater than carbon dioxide. Therefore, we say that 1kg of methane has the same effect as 25kg of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e).*

## COMPOSTING FOOD & PLANT-BASED PACKAGING

By composting food and packaging instead of throwing it in landfill, a different chemical process takes place which is far less harmful for the planet. When food and other organics break down in landfill, they undergo a process in the absence of oxygen that releases methane into the atmosphere. However, when food and packaging break down in the presence of oxygen in a highly controlled composting system, no methane is released. Therefore, by composting we are stopping one of the most potent GHG's from entering the atmosphere and enhancing global warming.

Across the weekend, 175kg of food and packaging was diverted from landfill, and composted locally. This means that **868kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e** was saved from being released into the atmosphere. This number significantly increases when considering the four tonnes of packaging saved compared with 2018 - equating to **19,800kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e** saved. This is the equivalent of taking a Boeing 747 out of the sky for 110 hours (or roughly 6 return trips to Hawaii). Another example is not driving an average light vehicle for 108,791km (driving around Australia on the highway seven times). These figures are indeed conservative, as they do not take into account the energy used in transporting and manufacturing the packaging.



Additionally, by stacking bins inside bins when transporting to both Torquay and Geelong events, we were able to save 1 truck trip out and back, and the 90% reduction in waste had significant emissions and financial savings for waste management contracts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & POTENTIAL

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In order to achieve an even more effective and efficient resource recovery model for National Celtic Festival in years to come, the following changes could be implemented:

- Compulsory compliance with reusables by vendors when pre-event contract agreements are signed.
- Implement a convenience charge system if single-use remains an option. It is recommended that vendors could place a 'tax' on their packaging, whereby patrons must pay an extra \$2 if they want their food in single-use packaging (per item). This way patrons will be more motivated to participate in the Rent-A-Kit system.
- Restructure the layout of the eating area. For the convenience charge system to be most effective, it is important to ensure that there are ample seating and table areas to 'eat in'. By creating a clearly defined designated eating area, individuals may be much more likely to Rent-A-Kit and 'eat in'. Also, as individuals enter the eating area, they can purchase their reusable kit tickets, and as they leave the area, they can drop their kits off to be washed. This way it will ensure no kits are removed by the public, and all kits can be instantly dropped at the wash station for maximum efficiency.
- Include Rent-A-Kit tickets in the ticket prices. Those individuals who pre purchase tickets to the festival receive their Rent-A-Kit tickets when they collect their wristbands for the event. This way we can guarantee those individuals will be using reusables. This would reduce the staff required to set up and educate attendees on choosing a kit on-site.

# CONCLUSION

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B-Alternative thoroughly enjoyed the festival, while the amazing results achieved by a combined effort from the wider community proved that effective and tangible low-impact results are more than achievable in the events sector. Well done to all in achieving a **90% waste reduction from 2018, and an additional 60% waste diversion from landfill.**

We see the progressive thinking and long-term prospects for a regenerative lifestyle in the event world with these models always evolving. National Celtic Festival management have been wonderful to work with and able to support with answers and suggestions wherever required.

We believe that the National Celtic Festival and other events should continue to aspire to reach zero waste and becoming completely reusable for the benefit of the planet. This model has been proven to be financially beneficial and far more environmentally sustainable than models where single-use packaging is in use.

The paradigm shift is here! Being an environmentally conscious business is less expensive than a business who has little consideration for the environment. There is now a win-win situation for taking a stand and making environmentally conscious business decisions.

CONGRATULATIONS NATIONAL CELTIC FESTIVAL ON RECOGNISING THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL POWER AND BENEFITS OF ETHICAL BUSINESSES CHOICES



B alternative