

# Best practice for printing brochures



Ecotourism Australia recommends eliminating printing as much as possible. This fact sheet will provide you with tips to cut back on printing materials and, if printing cannot be eliminated, the information and tools needed for your business to print marketing and interpretation materials more sustainably.

## Before designing the brochure

### Have you considered more sustainable alternatives?

#### Online Brochures



Going digital with your business brochure can help more than just the environment:

- You can reach a broader audience, e.g. through social media sharing and email forwarding;
- You gain flexibility, e.g. you can update your online brochure at any time to keep it up to date without having to reprint new copies every time you change something;
- You save money by avoiding the cost of paper, printing, and mailing.

**Tip** If you're using an online brochure for interpretation, let your visitors know at the time of booking and make it easy for them to download it by providing them with the link and/or access to the Internet before starting the visit.

#### DID YOU KNOW?



Every tonne of waste paper we divert from local landfill saves 2.9 tonnes of carbon emissions. [Source: Australian Paper]

#### Signage



Using signs for interpretation may be the best long-term solution for your business to cut back on printing materials.

- Interactive signs can improve visitor satisfaction by providing interesting and memorable experiences where brochures are more limited;
- Signs remove the waste that paper brochures create and reduce the risk of visitors littering in areas where there is no waste collection.
- Consider accessibility in your design (for example placing the sign at a height visible for wheelchair users, adding braille) and translating the information into different languages (directly on the sign or via a reference to a website, for example)

**Tip** To make it easy for visitors to take the information home or along during their visit (e.g. for a map), you can encourage them to take photos of your signage or provide them with a link to download the content of the sign.

## When designing the brochure

Some design decisions can help your business reduce the environmental impacts (and cost!) of printing:

- **Use less space.** Have you considered using a trifold brochure rather than multiple pages? Smaller fonts will enable you to put more text on the paper. Sometimes, changing the orientation from portrait to landscape can save space. But you'll have the best results and the most impact by presenting concise information.
- **Use standard paper sizes** (A3, A4, A5) as they result in less paper waste than custom sizes.
- Stick to the **maximum number of colours** your printer can manage with a single press run.
- **Include certification logos** and/or a note about your sustainable print choices to raise awareness.
- **Add a note** to inform your customers that your brochure is reusable and how they can pass it on to others for reuse. If not applicable, tell them how/where to throw it away with a note about recycling.
- **Ecofont** can help you save ink.
- Ensure you **follow responsible marketing best practice**, as per the ECO Certification criteria for example.

# When asking for a quote

When you ask your suppliers for a quote, inform them you are looking for eco-friendly printing processes. There are a few things to consider when choosing the printing company and the quote.

## The company's sustainability commitment

As with all your suppliers, best practice is to ask if the printing company you are considering has an environmental policy. If your supplier implements measures to reduce their footprint, it will reduce yours.



For example, you may want to find out about their use of sustainable energy, how they dispose of their waste, which cleaning products they use, how they train their staff, if they have plans to store their hazardous materials, where the materials come from, what packaging they use and how they manage transport. It is often easier to simply ask about the measures they have in place to reduce their emissions, their waste and risks of pollution.

**Tip** Third-party certifications are an easy indicator that suppliers are following the best practice in their industry. You may want to look for these logos, for example:



ISO 14001:2015



## Where the brochures will be printed



Using a local printer makes a positive impact on your local community, but it's also a way to reduce transport emissions.

Some printers outsource jobs, so it is recommended to ask if the printing is done in-house.

**Tip** If you save energy by choosing a supplier using renewable energy but multiply your transport emissions by ten because this supplier is far away, then it may not be the most sustainable option for printing your brochures.

## The type of paper



There are many different types of paper and some are a lot more eco-friendly than others. We recommend looking at these characteristics:

- **The paper density (GSM).** Lighter paper (70 or 80 instead of 120) is cheaper and uses less wood product and energy for production and transport.
- **Recycled paper.** Using recycled products is the best way to increase the demand for recycling and reduce the use of raw materials, creating a circular economy to reduce deforestation. The highest percentage is the most eco-friendly option.
- **FSC certified paper.** This certification ensures that the forest used to produce the paper is managed sustainably.
- **Chlorine free paper.** Paper can be bleached using chlorine, which is harmful to the environment.
- **Plasticised, neon or glossy laminated paper.** The production of these types of paper usually require toxic chemicals which make them difficult to recycle.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Each tonne of recycled paper saves:

- 13 trees,
  - 2.5 barrels of oil,
  - 4, 100 kWh of electricity,
  - 4 cubic metres of landfill
  - 31,780 liters of water
- [Source: SUEZ ANZ]

## The type of ink

Traditional inks are petroleum-based and can contain harmful toxins and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). More eco-friendly options exist and may be available for you. Ask your printing suppliers about vegetable-based inks, solvent-free or VOC-free inks.