

The Sustainable Packaging Guidelines (SPGs) is a nationally recognised resource that helps businesses of all sizes to improve the sustainability of their packaging.

This fact sheet is designed to provide small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with a snapshot of what the SPGs are and how they can help their business make the change to more sustainable packaging.



3 ways the SPGs can help your business

Using the SPGs is one of the most comprehensive ways a business can improve the sustainability of their packaging. Here's a look at some of the benefits they can bring to your organisation:

1

Get the facts

There are a lot of environmental claims on the market. By getting to know the SPGs and the 10 Sustainable Packaging Principles they cover, your business will have a stronger understanding of what sustainable packaging really means.

2

Make confident choices

Understanding the SPGs will give you the confidence to design or purchase the right packaging, both for your business and the environment.

3

Reap the rewards

Making the switch to more sustainable packaging has numerous benefits. These range from improving your brand reputation and attracting new customers, to saving costs with more efficient packaging and transport.

Getting to know the SPGs

The SPGs is made up of 10 Sustainable Packaging Principles. These are:



Eliminate hazardous materials:

Avoid using hazardous substances that could be toxic to humans or other living creatures. A common example are the heavy metals contained in some inks and pigments.



Use recycled materials:

Make the switch to packaging made from previously recycled materials. It gives our recycling industry a boost by creating a stronger market for recycled materials. It also reduces the strain on the finite virgin materials needed to make packaging from scratch. Recycled materials generally use less energy and water to manufacture, and generate lower greenhouse gas emissions than virgin materials of the same type.



Design to minimise litter:

The last place we want your business's packaging – and branding – to end up is in our beautiful natural environments. If you currently use any common litter items like fast food and beverage packaging – make the switch to better alternatives.



Design to reduce product waste:

Design or use packaging that keeps your products safe, so they don't end up as waste unnecessarily. This is particularly important for food businesses.



Design for transport efficiency:

Lighter packaging, fully using up shipping space and exploring bulk packaging are some of the ways you can keep your business's transport as efficient as possible. This change can also bring significant savings in energy, greenhouse gas emissions, water, packaging material and transport costs.



Use renewable materials:

Look for options to use renewable materials, which come from a living source and can be continually replenished. Paper and cardboard are two of the most common options available from renewable sources such as those that are from sustainable forests. This ultimately reduces the demand for non-renewable materials like metals and most plastics.



Design for accessibility:

Design your packaging to be easy for your customers to open, have legible labelling, and not compromise safety or quality. It's critical that your sustainable packaging also meets your customers' needs and expectations.



Design for recovery:

Design your packaging so it doesn't end up in landfill – through solutions like reducing or avoiding packaging, using reusable or recyclable packaging, or in some instances using compostable packaging. The more packaging we recover and keep in the system, the less pressure we place on finite virgin materials.



Provide consumer information on sustainability:

Be transparent and provide your customer with clear information or advice about any environmental claims. One of the best ways to explain the correct disposal of your packaging is by using the Australasian Recycling Label.



Optimise for material efficiency:

Look for options to reduce the amount and weight of your packaging. This includes scrapping unnecessary packaging or using thinner, smaller or lighter options – without compromising on doing its job. More efficient packaging not only reduces environmental impact – it can also save your business money.



Take action:

Want to learn more about sustainable packaging?

Start your ARL journey today at www.arlmarketplace.org.au.