



CASE STUDY: FRINGE WORLD FESTIVAL 2025

HOW BETTERCUP'S REUSABLE CUP SYSTEM TRANSFORMED SUSTAINABILITY AT WA'S LARGEST ARTS FESTIVAL.

At a Glance:



ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST ARTS FESTIVALS, ATTRACTING 700,000+ ATTENDEES OVER FIVE WEEKS.



46,456 DRINKS SERVED IN REUSABLE CUPS OVER 31 DAYS.



372KG OF SINGLE-USE WASTE DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL.



84.7% RETURN RATE - EXCEEDING INDUSTRY BENCHMARKS.



EFFICIENT SYSTEMS REDUCED LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES.



A LONG TERM REUSE STRATEGY GETS BETTER OUTCOMES.

Fringe World: Big, Bold, and Built for Impact.

Fringe World Festival is one of Australia's largest and most vibrant arts festivals, drawing over 700,000 attendees annually to experience comedy, music, theatre, and immersive performances. Hosted in Russell Square, Perth, the festival creates a bustling pop-up entertainment hub with multiple venues, bars, and activations.

With such scale, waste management is a significant challenge, particularly when it comes to single-use plastics.

The Shift to Reuse: Learning from Past Challenges.

Fringe World had previously attempted a reusable cup system but struggled with the washing logistics—leading to inefficiencies in cup collection, cleaning, and redistribution. Without a structured reuse strategy, maintaining stock levels across bars became a major operational burden.



hello@bettercup.com.au
www.bettercup.com.au



2025: A New Approach with Bettercup.

For 2025, Fringe World partnered with Bettercup to:

- ✓ Overcome past logistical challenges to implement a seamless reuse system.
- ✓ Introduce structured washing and collection to maintain efficiency.
- ✓ Increase education for patrons and staff on reuse, ensuring higher return rates and waste diversion.

Bettercup's expertise in reusable cup systems helped Fringe World successfully integrate reusables into bar operations without disrupting service, well outperforming industry return rates and expectations.



The Reuse Model: How It Worked.

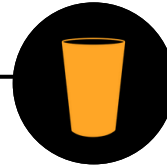
To ensure smooth implementation, Fringe World adopted a \$1 non-refundable deposit model, designed to encourage returns while covering the operational costs of a reuse system.

Cup types used:



Tumblers (425ml)

Used for beer and mixed drinks.



Tasters (285ml)

Replaced stemless wine glasses, offering versatility for both cocktails and wine.

How patrons returned cups:



Back to bars.

Patrons returned their cups directly when purchasing another drink.



Staff collection.

Cleaning teams retrieved misplaced cups.



Dedicated return bins.

Strategically placed around the venue for easy drop-off.



Waste sorting.

To ensure no cups ended up in general waste.

Results & Insights.

1. RETURN RATES:

Fringe World's 2025 reusable cup system exceeded industry standards for return rates, proving that clear processes and strategic adjustments can drive successful reuse initiatives at ongoing festivals.

- **Fringe World achieved an overall return rate of 84.7%.** This exceeds the 70 to 80% industry benchmark for similar scale reusable cup systems.

Industry Standard.

Benchmarks for reusable cup systems typically aim for return rates of 70-80%.



Fringe World 2025.

84.7%

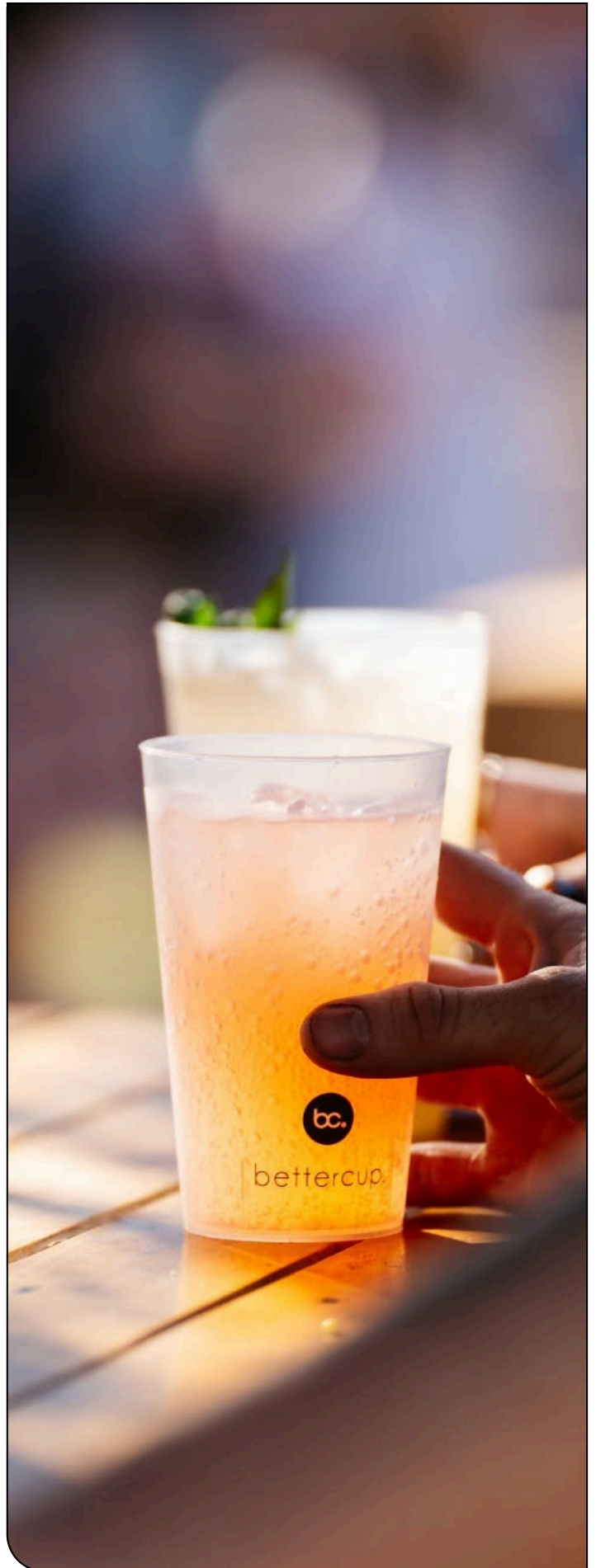
- Challenge: Patrons putting cups in general waste bins.
 - To resolve this, bins were repositioned so that all waste streams were grouped, making it easier for patrons to identify the correct bin for cup returns. Additionally, clear bin bags were introduced, allowing staff to quickly spot and retrieve misplaced cups, improving overall return rates.
- The introduction of clear bin bags allowed staff to retrieve misplaced cups more efficiently.



2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT: A TANGIBLE SHIFT TOWARDS ZERO WASTE.

By replacing single-use plastic cups with a structured reuse system, Fringe World made a measurable impact on waste reduction while maintaining a seamless patron experience.

**WITH CONTINUED
COMMITMENT,
FRINGE WORLD IS
POSITIONING ITSELF
AS A LEADER IN
SUSTAINABILITY
WITHIN AUSTRALIA'S
FESTIVAL CIRCUIT.**



3. Operational Efficiencies: Streamlining Cup Management.

A well-coordinated logistics plan ensured a steady supply of clean cups across all bars while identifying key areas for future improvement in training, incentives, and stock allocation.

CHALLENGE.	FUTURE IMPROVEMENT.
Some cups did not have pour lines built into the design. Staff manually marked pour lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bettercup staff to check whether pour lines on cups are required.
Demand for 285ml Tasters surged, particularly at cocktail bars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fringe World intends to shift to a higher proportion of 285ml Tasters to meet demand.
The bar staff turnover posed a challenge, as some staff were not consistently aware of the reuse system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement continuous training refreshers or briefings as part of onboarding. ✓ Incentivising staff engagement with the reuse system emerged as a key opportunity. A proposed initiative includes offering rewards, such as food and drink vouchers or a mystery shopper challenge, to encourage bar teams to reinforce proper cup return messaging.

Twice-weekly collections (Tuesdays and Fridays) proved effective, ensuring sufficient clean cup supply.

4. Patron Engagement & Communication Challenges.



Patron awareness and engagement played a crucial role in the success of the reuse system, with most attendees embracing the initiative.

However, some confusion around the deposit model highlighted areas for clearer communication.

- Overall, patrons understood the system and engaged positively.
- Return bins were effective, but some patrons mistakenly took cups home, believing the \$1 charge was a purchase fee rather than a reuse fee.
- Returning patrons from previous years were confused about the lack of refund, as the system had changed from previous deposit-based years.

Recommended Strategy:

Enhanced pre-event communications (email, social media, ticketing platforms) to clearly explain the reuse process. Communications should emphasise the benefits of reuse, the amount of waste saved and lean on behaviour change principles to get patron buy in.



5. Offsite Washing: How It Worked.

Managing reusable cup hygiene at a multi-week festival required a well-structured offsite washing system to keep clean cups in circulation without disrupting bar operations.

Perth Fringe Festival opted for offsite washing instead of an onsite wash station to keep things simple and efficient. Offsite washing meant they didn't need to set up extra infrastructure, use water and power on-site, or worry about space for washing equipment. It also ensured cups were properly sanitised at a commercial facility, keeping everything running smoothly while freeing up staff to focus on serving patrons instead of managing washing logistics.

Collection & Sorting.

- Dirty cups were collected from bars, return bins, and staff retrieval throughout the day.
- To maintain hygiene, dirty and clean cups were always stored separately.
- At a designated sorting area, cups received a preliminary rinse before being packed for transport.

Redistribution to Bars.

- Clean cups were returned to the festival site and distributed across bars as needed.
- Logistics ran smoothly, ensuring bars had a consistent supply of clean stock.

Offsite Washing & Station.

- Twice weekly, cups were transported offsite for commercial washing and high-temperature sanitisation.
- Each batch was inspected for damage, restacked, and prepared for reuse.

Opportunity: Clearer reporting from offsite washing provider will help refine stock management in future years.



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The Future of Reuse at Fringe World.

2026 & Beyond: What's next?

- ✓ Fringe World is committed to reuse beyond 2025 and has already outlined plans to continue for 2026.
- ✓ Long-term sustainability goals include eventual ownership of a branded reusable cup fleet, reducing costs and providing additional marketing and communication opportunities.
- ✓ More staff training touchpoints will be introduced to ensure consistency across the entire festival.

Key Takeaways: Why this matters.



Sustainability at scale.

372kg of waste eliminated.



Patron buy-in.

84.7% return rate, proving high engagement.



Operational success.

Logistics and collection systems ran smoothly.



Pathway to ownership.

Fringe World's move toward a self-owned cup fleet will reduce long-term costs.

Fringe World's commitment to a circular economy through Bettercup's reusable system demonstrates that large-scale events can operate sustainably—without compromising the festival experience.

With further refinements in staff training, communication, and stock distribution, **Fringe World is on track to becoming one of Australia's most sustainable festivals.**

WANT TO CUT WASTE, SAVE MONEY, AND MAKE REUSABLES EFFORTLESS AT YOUR FESTIVAL?

Bettercup has worked with some of the biggest festivals in Australia to eliminate single-use waste without disrupting operations. Whether you're starting fresh or refining your current system, we can help you design a cost-effective, hassle-free reuse model that actually works.

Get in touch today to see how we can help your festival make reusables simple, scalable, and successful.



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