



## Overview

The Sydney Opera House (SOH) partnered with Bettercup to trial a reusable cup system during selected events at Vivid LIVE in May 2024. The key driver behind this initiative is to reduce the environmental impact of single-use cup waste, aligning with the Sydney Opera House's broader sustainability and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments.

Specifically, the Sydney Opera House aimed to evaluate different reusable cup models across multiple bars over several nights during the trial, with the goal of establishing a sustainable and scalable model that can be expanded to all events at the Sydney Opera House, significantly reducing single-use waste and promoting environmental responsibility.

# CASE STUDY: SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE TRIAL

## HOW THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE ACHIEVED IMPRESSIVE TRIALS RESULTS IN REDUCING SINGLE-USE CUP WASTE DURING VIVID LIVE 2024, PAVING THE WAY FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENT PRACTICES.

## Results and Analysis

Overall, the reusable cup trial yielded exceptional results, setting a new benchmark for the Sydney Opera House. Together, Sydney Opera House and Bettercup established success metrics for the trial, and Sydney Opera House excelled in achieving these.

The trial demonstrated high return rates, significant reduction in single-use waste, and overwhelmingly positive feedback from patrons. These outcomes underscore the potential for ongoing implementation of a reusable cup system and set a strong precedent for future sustainability and reusable cup initiatives.



**83% CUP  
RETURN RATE.**



**OVER 50 KGS OF  
SINGLE-USE WASTE  
ELIMINATED.**



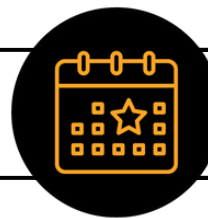
**OVER \$1000 SAVED  
BY USING REUSABLE  
CUPS.**



**HIGH LEVEL OF  
PATRON  
SATISFACTION.**



**NO NOTICEABLE  
IMPACT ON BAR  
SERVICE.**



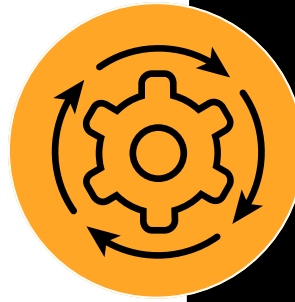
**MODEL WAS EASY  
TO UNDERSTAND  
AND IMPLEMENT FOR  
BAR STAFF.**

## Purpose of the Trial.



### High Return Rates.

The trial demonstrated that reusable cups could be implemented successfully with high return rates, validating the system's practicality and effectiveness.



### Operational Insights.

Understanding how the reusable cup system would integrate with existing operations, including bar operators, cleaners, and other staff, was essential. This trial provided valuable insights for planning a broader implementation.



### Environmental Impact.

Single-use cups contributed significantly to waste generation and environmental degradation. By trialling a reusable cup system, Sydney Opera House successfully reduced its environmental footprint and showcased a commitment to sustainability.



### Patron Engagement.

Engaging with patrons during the trial allowed the Sydney Opera House to gather valuable feedback on perceptions and experiences related to reusable cups, ensuring that future implementations would meet patron expectations.



### Feasibility and Effectiveness.

The trial allowed the Sydney Opera House to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of reusable cups in different venues, providing crucial insights into potential challenges and areas for improvement, ensuring a smooth future implementation.



### Sustainability Goals.

The trial aligned with the Sydney Opera House's commitment to sustainability and ESG objectives. It supported broader efforts to adopt environmentally friendly practices, enhancing the Sydney Opera House's reputation as a leader in sustainability initiatives.

## Trial Scope.

**Event:** Vivid Sydney 2024

**Locations:** Joan Sutherland Theatre, Utzon Room, Studio and Drama Theatre

**Duration:** Friday 24 May to Sunday 2 June 2024

**Activity:** Replacing single-use cups used for servicing wine that are sent to landfill with reusable cups



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## Reuse Models.

During the trial, the Sydney Opera House tested two different reusable cup models to evaluate their effectiveness and feasibility.

### Cost-Included Model.



In this model, the **cost of the reusable cup was included in the price of the drink**. Patrons did not receive a financial incentive for returning the cup but were encouraged to do so through clear communication and signage. This model aimed to simplify the process for both patrons and bar operators, making it easy to implement and manage.

- **Locations:** Trialed in both TWG (Trippas White Group) and DHG (Doltone Hospitality Group) venues.
- **Results:** Achieved a high return rate average of 93% in TWG venues, demonstrating the effectiveness of this model.

### Return for Discount Model.



In this model, **patrons returned their reusable cups to any bar in exchange for a discount on their next drink**. This model provided a direct financial incentive for patrons to return their cups.

- **Locations:** Trialed only in TWG venues, not in DHG venues.
- **Results:** While this model encouraged returns, it required a longer preamble by staff to explain the process, which slightly impacted service speed.

**OVERALL, THE COST-INCLUDED MODEL PROVED TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE AND PREFERRED FOR ONGOING USE DUE TO ITS OPERATIONAL SIMPLICITY AND HIGH RETURN RATES.**

### Insights: Comparison to Industry Standards.

The reusable cup trial at the Sydney Opera House offers valuable insights when compared to industry standards for sustainability initiatives at large events. Here are some key points of comparison:

#### RETURN RATES.

- **Industry Standard:** benchmarks for reusable cup systems typically aim for return rates of 70-80%.
- ✓ **SOH Trial:** The SOH trial achieved an overall return rate of 83%, with TWG venues reaching an impressive 93%. This places the trial at the higher end of industry standards, demonstrating the system's effectiveness and patron engagement.

### Industry Standard.

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

75%

### Sydney Opera House Trial.

83%



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## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

- **Industry Standard:** Leading events that have implemented reusable cup systems report significant reductions in single-use waste.
- ✓ **SOH Trial:** The trial successfully served 5,895 drinks in reusable cups, diverting thousands of single-use cups from landfill. This aligns with top-performing events in the industry, reinforcing SOH's commitment to sustainability.

## OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY.

- **Industry Standard:** Efficient integration of reusable cup systems without disrupting service is a common goal, with a typical target of maintaining service speed within a 30-60 second window per transaction.
- ✓ **SOH Trial:** The trial maintained service speed effectively, with no noticeable impact in TWG venues and only minor adjustments required in DHG venues. This performance meets industry expectations for operational efficiency.

## PATRON ENGAGEMENT.

- **Industry Standard:** High levels of patron engagement and positive feedback are crucial for the success of sustainability initiatives, with successful programs often reporting satisfaction rates above 80%.
- ✓ **SOH Trial:** The trial received overwhelmingly positive feedback from patrons, indicating strong support and satisfaction with the reusable cup system. This positive reception is consistent with successful industry practices.

## COST EFFECTIVENESS.

- **Industry Standard:** Achieving cost neutrality or savings is a key measure of success, with many events finding reusable cup systems cost-effective in the long run.
- ✓ **SOH Trial:** The trial demonstrated cost savings compared to single-use cups, achieving a total cost savings of \$665.4 in TWG and \$513.6 in DHG venues. This financial performance aligns well with industry standards for cost-effective sustainability initiatives and demonstrates promise of cost-neutrality potential ongoing.



## Conclusion.

***The Sydney Opera House's reusable cup trial not only meets but exceeds industry standards in several areas for similar reuse system initiatives.***

The high return rates, significant environmental impact, operational efficiency, positive patron engagement, and initial cost savings demonstrated underscore the success of the trial and its potential for broader implementation. These insights position the Sydney Opera House as a leader in sustainable event practices, setting a high benchmark for other venues to follow.



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## Future Recommendations.

Based on the results from the reusable cup trial at Vivid LIVE 2024, Bettercup recommends considering the following items for future rollouts of the reusable cup model.

### Reusable Cup Models.

#### Adopt the Cost-Included Model:

- ✔ Given its high return rates and operational simplicity, adopt the cost-included model for all future events to encourage cup returns without impacting service speed.

#### Alternative Models:

- ✔ Additionally, consider other reuse models for different types of events e.g. Forecourt events.

### Enhanced Communication.

#### Pre-event Messaging:

- ✔ Increase pre-event communications through emails, social media, and ticketing platforms to inform patrons about the reusable cup system and its environmental benefits.

#### On-Site Signage:

- ✔ Ensure clear and prominent signage at all bars and return bins, explaining the reusable cup process and encouraging returns.

#### Staff Training:

- ✔ Provide comprehensive training materials for onsite staff to ensure each stakeholder group understands their role within the reusable cup system.

### Optimise Operational Logistics.

#### Cup Distribution:

- ✔ Establish a streamlined and repeatable process for distributing clean cups to bars and collecting used cups for washing for each bar operator.

#### Storage Solutions:

- ✔ Address storage challenges by reviewing efficient stacking solutions and allocating sufficient space for both clean and used cups.

#### Washing and Handling:

- ✔ Refine washing procedures to ensure efficiency and maintain hygiene standards. Consider investing in additional washing equipment if necessary.

### Engage and Educate Patrons.

#### Feedback Mechanism:

- ✔ Implement a robust feedback mechanism to gather patron insights and continuously improve the system ongoing. This could include post-event surveys and real-time feedback options during events where changes or further refinements are made.

### Monitor and Report Metrics.

#### Regular Reporting:

- ✔ Request reports from stakeholders on any key metrics such as return rates, waste reduction, and cost savings. Use this data to make informed decisions and adjustments to the initiative as needed.

### Strengthen Stakeholder Collaboration.

#### Regular Meetings:

- ✔ Ensure any regular meetings with stakeholders, including bar operators, cleaning staff etc include the reusable cup topic, to ensure to address any challenges, and share best practices between groups.

### Plan for Scalability.

#### Long-term Goals:

- ✔ Set long-term sustainability goals and create a roadmap for achieving them, ensuring that the reusable cup system aligns with broader environmental objectives

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING US END SINGLE-USE WASTE.**



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