

RUNNING NLS9 sustainably

From the moment we started working on the expression of interest to bring the 2019 New Librarians' Symposium (NLS9) to Adelaide the conference committee wanted to look at ways of making the event sustainable. Our main focus was on waste management, catering and conscious purchasing but we also wanted to use digital over print and use 100 percent recycled FSC certified paper if printing was unavoidable.

Waste management

We audited the recycling bins that were available at the venue, and finding them lacking, we organised additional bins (including for the collection of soft plastics recycling). We then established waste management stations with clear signage and monitored the bins throughout the day to sort any misplaced items. The 10-cent recycling was collected and taken home each day to be donated to a good cause. I also took home the compost and soft plastics each day as the venue was not able to guarantee that these would be managed appropriately.

Catering

We wanted to eliminate the use of single use and disposable items, so we hired large and small plates, cups and saucers, glasses, and cloth napkins to use throughout the event. We chose food that did not require cutlery to eliminate that hassle. We used four different caterers to provide variety in the food provided to attendees and to showcase the great range of local South Australian businesses providing sustainable, vegan or vegetarian options. Of the eight meals served at the event, three were vegan and three were vegetarian. We wanted to

demonstrate how delicious, filling and varied plant-based food can be. We asked all caterers to supply their food on reusable platters which we returned to them after the event. Additional snacks were purchased in bulk in glass jars to minimise problematic packaging.

Conscious consumerism

With our conference purchasing we looked for the most sustainable options available to us. For beverages other than water (which came from a filter tap) we sourced items in glass bottles. For speaker gifts we got Lunch Swags and local chocolate and committee members got Tea Swags and loose-leaf tea from the Barossa Valley. For the delegate bags we organised reusable shopping bags from Boomerang Bags, made from second hand and recycled material. We carefully considered what should go in the bags as we didn't want them full of items that would immediately get thrown away. We also provided an area where people could return the bags or items in the bags that they didn't want for others to use or for us to donate or recycle at the end of the conference.

These elements would not have worked without the support of our delegates. To make sure everyone was aware of our initiatives prior to the event, we published a blog, used social media and sent everyone an email. This encouraged delegates to bring their own reusables to the event and explained the waste hierarchy and our zero waste principles in extensive detail. At the event we went through the process with attendees in the welcome to the conference speech and updated them on the waste management progress throughout the event. 🌱

PIXIE STARDUST AALIA (CP)
NLS9 Co-Convenor Metadata and
Special Collections Librarian
Flinders University
pixie.stardust@flinders.edu.au

