



# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

20

25

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CONNECTING CREATIVITY WITH  
SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH LIGHT,  
MUSIC, MINDS & FOOD.



# INTRODUCTION

Destination NSW leads the strategic growth of the NSW visitor economy, supporting world-class events that drive cultural vibrancy and economic impact across the state.

Vivid Sydney is Australia's leading multi-artform festival and a flagship event on the global cultural calendar. In 2025, under the theme Dream, the festival invited audiences to explore imagination, innovation and connection through Light, Music, Ideas and Food, transforming Sydney's iconic precincts into immersive creative experiences.

Sustainability remains embedded in the festival's delivery. Through responsible resource management, collaboration with venues and suppliers, strong public transport partnerships and continued improvements in production practices, Vivid Sydney works to reduce environmental impact while strengthening accessibility, inclusion and community engagement.

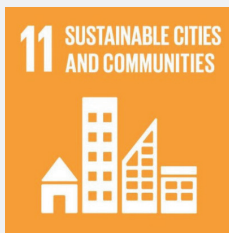
This summary highlights the key sustainability initiatives delivered in 2025, reflecting Vivid Sydney's ongoing commitment to balancing creative ambition with environmental and social responsibility.



# PRIORITY SDGS

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The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030. The goals highlighted below were selected as the focus of the Vivid Sydney Sustainability Program due to their close alignment with the festival's values, mission, and capacity to drive meaningful change.



## SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities

Vivid Sydney 2025 made a measurable contribution to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by enhancing the inclusiveness, accessibility and sustainability of Sydney's night-time environment. Across the Festival, Vivid Sydney delivered improvements that increased public access to safe, welcoming and culturally vibrant spaces while supporting local precincts and reducing environmental impact.

The Festival maintained its accessible infrastructure, including established pathways, ramps, Changing Places facilities and dedicated viewing areas across key precincts. Sensory considerations were embedded through new quiet spaces, accessible viewing areas and clear sensory categorisation of installations, helping visitors plan their journeys and avoid sensory overload. The Hidden Disability Sunflower Program was offered again in 2025, supported by trained staff and volunteers who assisted visitors with non-visible disabilities. Additional digital signage and improved wayfinding continued to reduce reliance on one-off printed materials while making navigation easier for all visitors.

Vivid Sydney 2025 also contributed to more sustainable and resilient communities by supporting local businesses and encouraging participation in the city's cultural life. The Local Business Program continues to engage restaurants, bars, tour operators, attractions and hotels to promote their services or products, with participating businesses receiving direct exposure through Vivid Sydney's deals and experiences webpage, linking customers straight to operator websites. The Volunteer program provided skills development opportunities and strengthened community involvement in the Festival's delivery.

Environmental improvements further supported SDG 11. Corflute signage was recycled through waste partners, with digital kiosks used more widely to reduce single-use materials. Sustainability data and reporting services measured waste, transport and energy outcomes, enabling stronger benchmarking and continuous improvement. Close coordination with Transport for NSW, City of Sydney and Placemaking NSW ensured safe crowd movement, accessible drop-off zones and improved transport links throughout the event period.

Through these actions, Vivid Sydney 2025 demonstrated a clear and tangible commitment to building a more inclusive, sustainable and connected city, aligning strongly with the intent of SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.

# PRIORITY SDGS continued



## SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals

Vivid Sydney 2025 demonstrated how major cultural events can serve as powerful platforms for collaboration, community impact and social inclusion. The Festival partners with charity, community and creative organisations — forging enduring connections that extended far beyond the event itself.

- In 2025, Vivid Sydney partnered with Sydney Children’s Hospitals Foundation, supporting its mission to “press play on childhood” and offering experiences that inspired hope, creativity and joy for children and families facing health challenges.
- The Festival’s commitment to community-led art and inclusion was reinforced through Colour the City. This initiative invited all members of the community to contribute artworks, which were then digitally projected onto the ASN Clocktower Building in The Rocks. By elevating local voices in a highly visible format, the project activated community creativity, strengthened social connection and celebrated the unique identity of neighbourhoods across Sydney.
- Vivid Sydney collaborated with disability and community support organisations to offer free accessible minibus parking, enabling group homes, support services and community groups to bring participants with mobility needs to the Festival at no cost — reducing barriers to access and broadening participation.
- Through the 2025 “Ideas” pillar, including free sessions such as Firetalk, Vivid Sydney created public platforms for storytelling, discussion and exchange — convening voices from diverse backgrounds to share ideas, build understanding and foster connections across communities.

Together these collaborations illustrate how Vivid Sydney 2025 embodied SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals — delivering social value, strengthening community ties, improving access and demonstrating the capacity of cultural events to drive inclusive, collaborative and sustainable outcomes across the city.

# PRIORITY SDGS continued

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## SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

SDG 10 focuses on reducing inequalities and ensuring that people of all backgrounds, cultures and abilities can participate fully in public life. Vivid Sydney 2025 contributed to this goal through programming and access initiatives designed to broaden representation, reduce barriers and support inclusive participation.

Free and low-cost events played a central role. Tumbalong Nights delivered 23 evenings of live, family-friendly music at no cost, while Vivid Music’s Global Sounds platform showcased culturally and linguistically diverse artists — including Dobet Gnahoré (Ivory Coast), Mỹ Anh (Vietnam), Stella Jang (South Korea) and Gabriele Poso (Italy). These multilingual performances offered meaningful representation for Sydney’s diverse communities and encouraged cultural participation among audiences who may not always see themselves reflected in major festival line-ups.

Vivid Ideas 2025 also strengthened inclusivity through accessible, community-focused programming. Free sessions such as Firetalk created space for storytellers and creatives from varied backgrounds, while headline events with Nick Offerman and Megan Mullally, Jimmy Chin and Martha Stewart broadened access to global perspectives and creative dialogue.

Vivid Food complemented this approach with offerings for a range of budgets and tastes, from premium Vivid Chef Series events to more casual and family-friendly experiences such as Vivid Fire Kitchen, allowing more visitors to engage with the Festival’s culinary program in ways that suited their circumstances.

To reduce practical barriers, Vivid Sydney provided free accessible minibus parking for disability organisations, group homes and community groups. This supported equitable attendance for visitors who rely on supported travel or mobility assistance.

Together, these measures demonstrated Vivid Sydney’s commitment to SDG 10 by supporting participation across diverse cultures, abilities and socioeconomic backgrounds, and by creating multiple, inclusive entry points into the Festival experience.

# PRIORITY SDGS continued

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## SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption & Production

Vivid Sydney 2025 contributed meaningfully to SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production by prioritising resource efficiency, reducing waste and embedding more sustainable practices across festival planning, procurement and delivery. The Festival continued to strengthen its approach to responsible material use, sustainability reporting and supplier collaboration, ensuring environmental considerations were integrated into operational decision-making.

A key focus in 2025 was the reduction of single-use materials. Over 1,500kg of corrflute and event plastics were recovered and recycled through established waste partnerships, diverting material from landfill. Sustainability practices were also embedded into procurement processes, with suppliers supported to adopt solutions such as reusable infrastructure, minimised packaging and improved waste separation.

Visitor engagement also supported responsible consumption. Public messaging encouraged the use of public transport, with data indicating that approximately 76% of visitors travelled by train, light rail, bus or ferry during the Festival.

Through these actions, Vivid Sydney 2025 demonstrated a clear commitment to reducing environmental impact, supporting circular resource use and strengthening sustainable delivery practices—aligning strongly with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

### Collective Impact

Together, these four SDGs formed the foundation of Vivid Sydney's sustainability approach. By tackling responsible consumption, sustainable urban environments, inclusive access, and partnerships, the festival showed the potential for cultural events to make a meaningful contribution to global goals while inspiring communities to embrace a more sustainable future.

# ABOUT OUR REPORTING

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Vivid Sydney prioritises sustainability as part of its long-term commitment to measure, report on and reduce the environmental impact of the festival.

The festival uses EventZero, a specialist carbon measurement platform aligned with recognised ISO standards for sustainable event management, to support structured data collection and analysis across key operational areas. In 2025, suppliers were provided with direct access to enter their sustainability data into the platform, streamlining the reporting process, improving response times and enhancing data quality. Live webinars, on-demand training sessions and dedicated office hours were also delivered to support suppliers throughout the reporting phase.

The data was then analysed using EventZero to estimate Vivid Sydney's carbon impact across the key categories outlined below.



Energy emissions from mains electricity and temporary power sources



Travel impacts associated with audience, staff, and contractors



Festival waste, including food and materials



Food and beverage related emissions



Freight and transport of equipment



Lifecycle impacts of production materials

# AT A GLANCE

## VIVID SYDNEY 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

2.5 MILLION

ATTENDED VIVID SYDNEY 2025  
OVER THE 23 NIGHT  
EVENT

\$164 MILLION



GENERATED IN VISITOR  
EXPENDITURE

1.6K+ VOLUNTEER  
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED



907k Followers

ACROSS ALL OWNED SOCIAL CHANNELS



637M

REACHED  
GLOBALLY BY  
#VIVIDSYDNEY

85%

OF ATTENDEES  
PURCHASED  
FOOD AND  
BEVERAGES

53%

OF LOCAL  
BUSINESS  
REPORTED A  
HIGHER THAN  
NORMAL  
INCREASE IN  
REVENUE

739 VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED 27,696  
HOURS OF SERVICE WITH AN ESTIMATED  
VALUE OF \$1.29 MILLION IN 2025

64%

ATTENDED  
2 NIGHTS  
OR MORE

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

3.81 million **public transport trips**



WERE RECORDED DURING  
**VIVID SYDNEY**  
OVER THE  
23 nights

**OVER 95%**



OF ENERGY USED  
FOR VIVID  
SYDNEY 2025  
**WAS**  
RENEWABLE



WATER REFILL STATIONS SAVED  
**203 KG OF PLASTIC**  
WATER BOTTLES FROM LANDFILL



**ECO-FRIENDLY FENCING SAVED, 9.6 KG OF PLASTIC**

OFFSET 100%

OF REPORTED EMISSIONS:

**648 TONNES CO<sub>2</sub>**

THROUGH THE PURCHASE OF ACCREDITED

CARBON OFFSET CREDITS



SPLASHDOWN VACUUM TOILETS SAVED OVER

**3 MILLION**

LITRES OF WATER COMPARED TO FULL FLUSH TOILETS

**95%** OF LIGHT

INSTALLATIONS USED LED LIGHTING

REDUCING ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY MORE THAN **75%**


**94%** OF VIVID SYDNEY ARTISTS & STAFF TRAVELLED BY **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

# SOCIAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

**45,166 attendees** downloaded the **ACCESSIBILITY MAP**



**OVER 59,000** ATTENDEES USED A **WHEELCHAIR OR REQUIRED MOBILITY ASSISTANCE**




THE FESTIVAL WELCOMED **739 VOLUNTEERS** FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS, RANGING IN AGE FROM 18 TO 90.

VIVID SYDNEY 2025 FEATURED **122 WHEELCHAIR-ACCESSIBLE** INSTALLATIONS AND EVENTS.

 IN THE 2025 IFEA PINNACLE AWARDS **VIVID SYDNEY WAS AWARDED GOLD** FOR BEST ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAM AND **SILVER** FOR BEST VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

 **67%** OF VIVID SYDNEY 2025 SUPPLIERS SURVEYED **HAD A FORMAL GENDER EQUALITY POLICY**

 **64%** OF SUPPLIERS SURVEYED OPERATE ACCORDING TO AN APPROVED **LGBTIQ+ inclusiveness** POLICY OR STRATEGY

**90%** OF ATTENDEES SURVEYED REPORTED A **POSITIVE ACCESSIBILITY EXPERIENCE**



**69%** OF VIVID SYDNEY SUPPLIERS SURVEYED IN 2025 OPERATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A FORMALLY APPROVED **DIVERSITY POLICY**

**OVER 600** HIDDEN DISABILITY **SUNFLOWER LANYARDS** DISTRIBUTED FREE OF CHARGE

# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

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Volunteering has always been central to Vivid Sydney's community impact. In 2025, the festival welcomed 739 volunteers from diverse backgrounds, ranging in age from 18 to 90, who together contributed 27,696 hours of service. Their efforts supported guest services, wayfinding, accessibility initiatives, and front-of-house roles across Light, Ideas, and Music programs.

The program was delivered in partnership with Casual Hands, a specialist volunteer management supplier. Volunteers received training, uniforms, catered meals, and free public transport to and from their shifts. Recognition was embedded at every stage: a thank-you function, collectible festival-themed pins, and six awards sponsored by partners such as Airbnb and Estee Lauder celebrated their contributions.

In 2025, the program was further acknowledged on an international stage, receiving a Silver IFEA Award for Best Volunteer Program. A testament to the program's quality, impact, and the commitment of its volunteers.

Based on the nationally recognised volunteering rate of \$46.62 per hour, the economic value of the program was estimated at \$1.29 million in 2025. Beyond this measurable impact, the program fostered pathways for leadership, with Team Leaders and Coordinators gaining skills in communication, crowd management, and emergency response. Recruitment initiatives also successfully expanded the volunteer base, with 70% of participants new to the program in 2025, strengthening community engagement year on year.

# EMBEDDING ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

**Vivid Sydney 2025 delivered its most comprehensive Accessibility Program to date, ensuring people of all abilities could fully participate in and enjoy the festival. Highlights included:**

4 Auslan-interpreted Ideas events  
122 wheelchair-accessible installations and events  
46 audio-described artworks and 500+ users of audio descriptions  
Over 600 Hidden Disability Sunflower Lanyards distributed free of charge  
5 accessible viewing areas across the Light Walk  
14 events accepting Companion Cards  
12 hearing loops installed at venues

The program's impact was recognised internationally, with Vivid Sydney receiving **Gold at the 2025 IFEA Awards for Best Accessibility Program**, marking another year of global acknowledgment for its leadership in accessible event design.

New initiatives in 2025 further strengthened support for visitors with disabilities. Additional quiet spaces for neurodiverse visitors, and an expanded accessible minibus parking scheme, which recorded a 10% increase in use. Collaborations with partners such as Get Skilled Access, Accessible Arts, Gig Buddies, and Red Bee Media helped strengthen delivery and ensure alignment with best-practice standards.

Vivid Sydney also championed community-led creativity. "Colour the City" projected artworks submitted by community groups, aged-care residents, disability organisations, and young patients from the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation onto the ASN Clock Tower. The Dream Scene installation at Tumbalong Park further engaged children from the Hospital Foundation, enabling them to see their ideas come alive in light. These initiatives reinforced that inclusion is not only about access, but about representation, voice, and celebration.

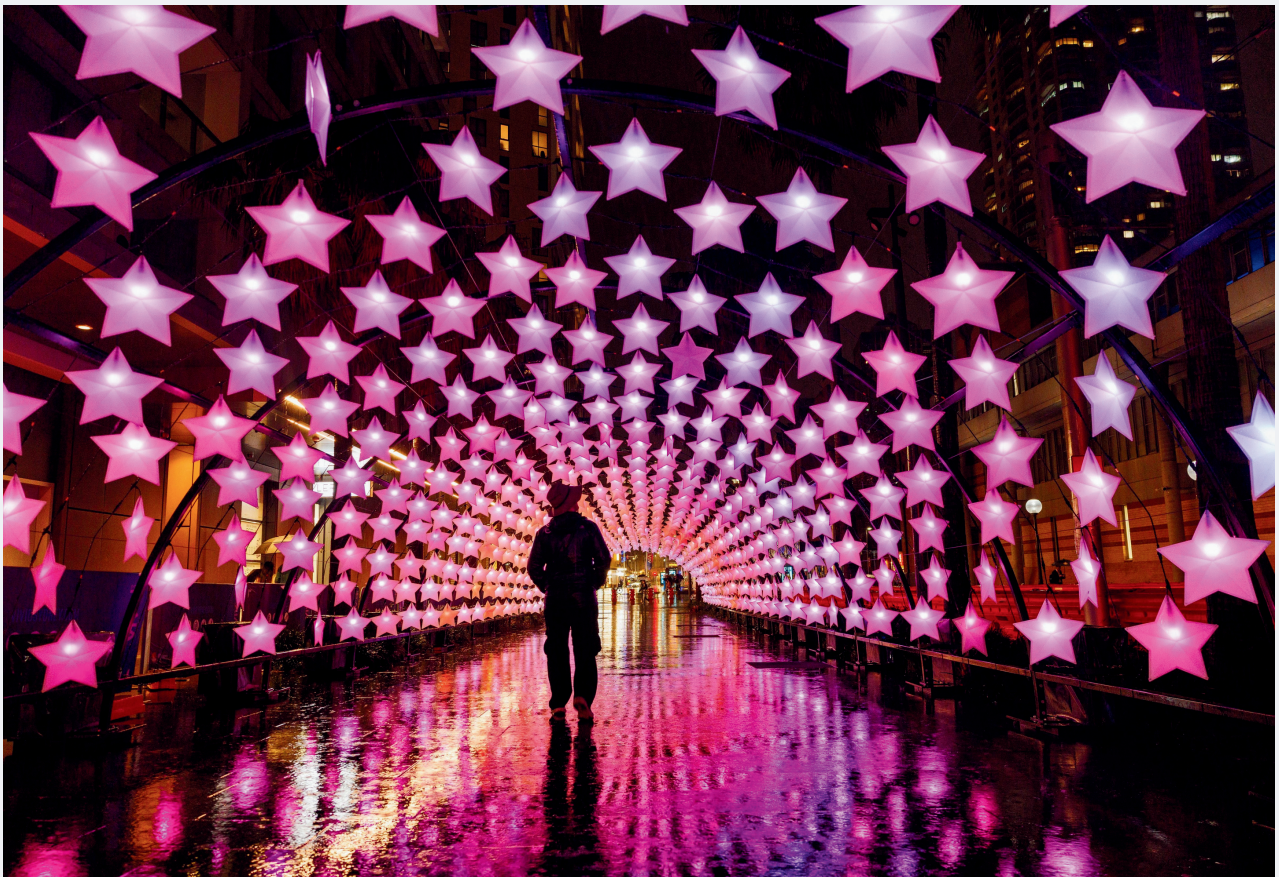
# SUMMARY

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In 2025, Vivid Sydney continued to strengthen and evolve its sustainability program. This year delivered the most comprehensive view to date of the festival’s environmental impact, supported by improved supplier engagement and more streamlined reporting processes. Vivid Sydney also offset 100% of the reported carbon emissions associated with the 2025 festival through the purchase of accredited carbon offset credits.

The enhanced dataset has provided clearer insight into key areas of impact, particularly catering, production materials and logistics. These insights will inform future planning and support more targeted sustainability initiatives across the festival.

The focus remains on refining data quality, strengthening collaboration with suppliers and venues, and embedding sustainability considerations into strategic decision-making. Vivid Sydney will continue building on this foundation in 2026 and beyond, ensuring creative ambition is delivered alongside responsible environmental and social outcomes.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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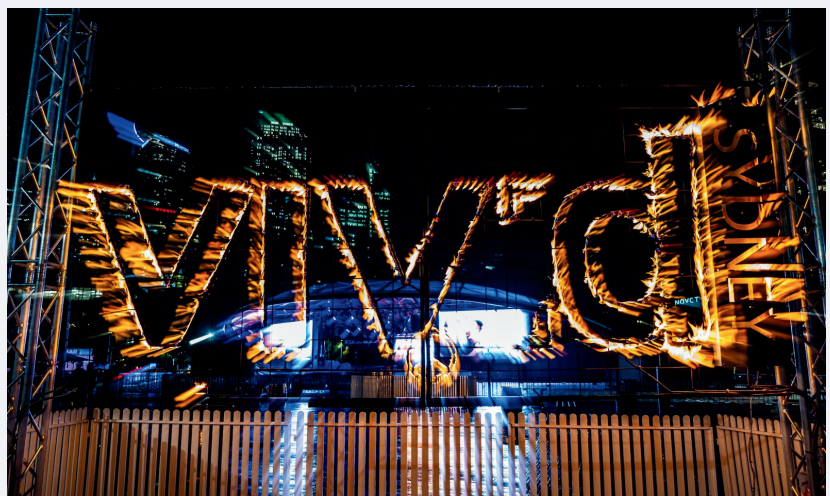
Our thanks and acknowledgements to:

**City of Sydney**  
**EventZero**  
**Placemaking NSW**  
**Premier's Department**  
**Suppliers and Stakeholders**  
**Sydney Children's Hospitals**  
**Sydney Opera House**  
**Transport for NSW**

We sincerely thank Vivid Sydney stakeholders for their support and efforts in advancing the sustainability initiatives and contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Your collaboration has been vital in driving positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

## Contact

For further information please contact the Vivid Sydney team at <https://www.vividsydney.com/info/contact-us>





**VIV'd** SYDNEY

