



# SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION DESIGN GUIDE

## PRE-PRODUCTION

At the outset of pre-production, do a tour of a reuse centre (i.e. [Reverse Garbage Sydney](#)), a venue's storeroom, or a set/prop warehouse to get inspiration for how your design can be based on reused materials. Try to embody a [circular design](#) ethos for your production.

If feasible, request digital scripts instead of hard copies. Alternatively ask your stage manager for double-sided scripts that have page breaks for new scenes/acts. That way, if major edits occur, the entire script does not have to be reprinted.

Challenge your designers to “do more with less”. The less you use, the more sustainable your designs are. Try not to think of it as an obstacle, but rather like a creative provocation or parameter - like money, time, or space - that we indie artists would normally work around (and thrive under!).

With the rest of your team, set goals relating to material sourcing, use, and disposal. Maybe you want to use more than 75% recycled materials. Or you're going to use whole sheets of material, so they can be reused more easily. Or you want 100% of your props and costumes to be able to be donated to charity.

See if you can make model-boxes from entirely recycled materials without the use of tape or hot glue - try pins, clips, or PVA. Or better yet, look into CAD modeling software for virtual model boxes.

As much as possible, source recycled or reused materials. See our [Sustainable Suppliers Directory for more information](#).

When you have to buy products, new or reused, follow principles of sustainable sourcing, paying particular attention to the most common materials (by volume), which is generally timber and/or steel.

- Buy as locally as possible to reduce your transport emissions. This can have a huge impact on your production's overall footprint.
- Avoid environmentally harmful materials and chemicals. See our [Sustainable Materials Guide for more information](#).
- If buying virgin timber, ensure its chain of custody is certified with either an FSC or PEFC/Responsible Wood certification.
- Use products that can have a life after the show, and try to reduce the amount you alter them in such a way that limits their reuse (i.e. cutting to bespoke sizes).

Record your materials as you order them so you can track your goals and streamline their end-of-show life. To do this, use this [Production Materials Inventory](#) spreadsheet that you update in collaboration with your Producer/Stage Manager/Production Manager.

- It will be much easier if you update your inventory as you acquire materials, rather than having to do it retrospectively.
- As part of this inventory, record your anticipated disposal methods (including transport) and if you like, who will be responsible for this disposal. Include your team to make it easier!

## PRODUCTION

Work with “designing for disassembly” principles in both design and construction. If a set-piece is easy to deconstruct, it is easy to store, tour, reuse, or recycle without risk of damage. For more information see our [Designing for Disassembly Guide here](#).

Some shortcut tips:

- Keep your design simple.
- Use a modular design.
- Use reversible fastenings.
- Create clear labels and instructions for disassembly.

Instead of using tape, use chalk or paint-pens for set mark-ups and labelling, and velcro, sash ties, bungee cords for securing set-pieces (where venue OH&S allows).

Collaborate with your lighting and sound designers to find ways to hide cabling in amongst the set, to avoid help them avoid using tape or visible cable traps.

Avoid environmentally hazardous chemicals for treating or cleaning including certain solvents, adhesives, and paints. See our [Sustainable Materials Guide for more information](#).

## POST-PRODUCTION

Before bump-out ensure everyone is briefed and has clear instructions on how to dismantle the set, and organise the materials/costumes/props for their storage/disposal.

During your bump-out, collaborate with your Stage Manager/Producer and use your notes from your [Production Materials Inventory](#) to track where each material/item is going and how it will get there.

## SOURCES

Arts on Tour (2022). "Green Touring Toolkit". Sydney: Arts on Tour. Accessed April 6, 2022. <https://artsontour.com.au/green-touring/>

Buro Happold (2021). "The Theatre Green Book 1: Sustainable Productions". London: Buro Happold & Renew Theatre. Accessed January 16, 2022. [https://theatregreenbook.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/THEATRE-GREEN-BOOK-ONE\\_beta1.pdf](https://theatregreenbook.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/THEATRE-GREEN-BOOK-ONE_beta1.pdf)

Buro Happold (2021). "Book 1 Toolkit: Making for Disassembly" in *The Theatre Green Book 1: Sustainable Productions*. London: Buro Happold & Renew Theatre. Accessed January 16, 2022. <https://theatregreenbook.com/sustainableproductions-toolkit/making-for-disassembly/>

Julie's Bicycle (2013). "Sustainable Production Guide". London: Julie's Bicycle. Accessed January 16, 2022. [https://juliesbicycle.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Sustainable\\_Production\\_Guide\\_2013.pdf](https://juliesbicycle.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Sustainable_Production_Guide_2013.pdf)

Filename: Sustainable Production Design Guide.docx  
Directory: /Users/christiantaylor/Desktop/STA/Department Guides  
Template: /Users/christiantaylor/Library/Group  
Containers/UBF8T346G9.Office/User  
Content.localized/Templates.localized/Normal.dotm  
Title:  
Subject:  
Author: Christian Taylor  
Keywords:  
Comments:  
Creation Date: 13/05/2022 20:14:00  
Change Number: 2  
Last Saved On: 13/05/2022 20:14:00  
Last Saved By: Christian Taylor  
Total Editing Time: 0 Minutes  
Last Printed On: 13/05/2022 20:14:00  
As of Last Complete Printing  
Number of Pages: 3  
Number of Words: 741  
Number of Characters: 5,446 (approx.)