

Practice Managers Breakfast

RACGP Standards 6th Edition - Environmental Sustainability Session

2 June 2026

Summary of table discussions

1. Current State - "What are we already doing well?"

- Reducing dated waste – don't order excess consumables that may expire
 - Reduced paper use – electronic forms, smart referrals, emails
 - Reducing referral pads (digital options)
 - Sending electronically
 - Running Steriliser when needed rather than routinely
 - Recycling paper – dedicated shredding, waste and recycling bins
 - Remove bins from desks so staff have to go to big bin and don't empty every day
 - Recycling ink cartridges
 - Use Recycling services such as Planet Ark
 - Recycle batteries – PRO TIP: cover the ends with cellotape
 - Laminate new patient forms and scan
 - Use of online forms like HotDoc
 - LED lights and automatic lights
 - Sensor taps
 - Airconditioning – manual rather than automatic, checklist to ensure turned off at close
 - Auto doors
 - Nurses mindful of clinical waste
 - Reduce unnecessary PPE use
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2. What common challenge was identified?

- Accidental printing (staff behaviour)
- Printing referrals
- Operations requirements over sustainability attitudes and behaviours
- Assignment of Benefit requirements
- Time and awareness of issues
- Behavioural change
- Attitudes and practices re gloves, etc
- GP engagement / commitment to improving sustainability
- Costs of switching to environmental friendly
- Landlord approval eg, for solar installation
- Time/accessibility to recycling services
- Cost of shredding services v staff time
- Pamphlets from drug reps

3. What practical sustainability initiative is worth exploring?

Realistic and achievable idea that practices could consider implementing now.

Most popular:

- Reducing paper use
- Waste reduction
- Staff engagement and education

Other suggestions

- Reducing ordering (for waste and cost)
 - Auditing / stocktake consumables
 - Encouraging hospital to send electronically
 - Recycling cans
 - Reduce single use items
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4. Key takeaways

- Incremental improvements and awareness
- Barrier is the cost to switch to sustainable options
- Location barrier particularly re shopping centres
- Paper reduction, QR codes, digital