



2026/27 Health Service Environmental Sustainability Competition

Participant Information Pack

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Introduction

This is a comprehensive guide to the 2026/27 University of Melbourne Health Service Environmental Sustainability Competition.

The sustainability competition began in 2022 at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, joining with Peter Mac and The Royal Women's hospitals in its second year. In 2025 the competition expanded to eight health services with over 40 projects registered.

Now in its 5th year the competition is open to staff across the eight participating health services:

- Royal Melbourne Hospital
- Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
- Royal Women's Hospital
- Royal Children's Hospital
- Austin Health
- St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne
- Western Health
- Mercy Health

By signing up for the competition, you will receive expert guidance from your organisational sustainability team and the University of Melbourne Sustainable Healthcare Team to drive meaningful change in your own health service. You will have the opportunity to attend the Sustainability in QI (SusQI) Workshop on Wednesday 1st July 2026. This hands-on workshop integrates sustainability into quality improvement methods, equipping you with the tools and knowledge necessary to develop your idea into a high-impact sustainability project.

Individuals or teams from any area of the health service (clinical and non-clinical) can participate. Projects can focus on any area including clinical care, energy use, waste management, supply chain, food service, facilities management, transportation etc. Information on previous projects can be found on our [website](#).

You will also have the opportunity to take part in an exciting research project evaluating the impact of the competition and SusQI training on organisational outcomes and individual wellbeing and engagement.

For more information on sustainable healthcare, SusQI and the competition please see the Competition Overview on our website.

Dates

Important dates for the 2026/2027 Competition

Date	Event
Wednesday 15 th April 2026	<p><u>Registration portal opens</u></p> <p>Registration portal opens for you to register your project idea and express interest in attending the SusQI workshop.</p> <p>You will also be asked if you would like to take part in a research project evaluating the competition and SusQI workshop – <i>more information can be found later in this document.</i></p> <p>Registration will also open to attend the Showcase and Launch event that will be held online on Wednesday 13th May.</p>
Wednesday 13 th May 2026 12-12:45pm Online	<p><u>Showcase and Launch event</u> and official competition opening.</p>
Wednesday 1 st July 2026	<p>Full-day face to face <u>Sustainability in Quality Improvement (SusQI) workshop.</u></p>
Wednesday 24 th March 2027	<p><u>Competition submissions due.</u></p>

Step 1: Project Registration

Project registration will open on April 15th 2026.

[Project registration link.](#)

You will be asked to submit the following information about your project:

Define the problem that your project aims to explore/solve. Do you have a SMART goal?
How will you explore the contributing factors to this problem?
Who needs to be involved/informed of the progress of this project?
What are your improvement ideas?
How will you measure your impact? (consider clinical, waste, carbon emissions, financial, social savings).

It is important that you also consider if your project requires a Quality Assurance/HREC application. Please discuss with your site/clinical lead or your hospital Ethics Committee for more information.

Step 2: Discuss your project with your site or clinical lead

After you register your project you will be contacted by your sustainability / clinical lead to discuss your project in more detail.

What can I expect from my site or clinical lead?

Site Sustainability Lead

- This will be the main coordinator and contact person for the competition.
- They will confirm that your project is suitable and feasible.
- They can assist you to identify key stakeholders, safety and quality team contacts, and required approvals.
- They can assist you to liaise with departments such as Safety & Quality/Quality Improvement, Procurement or Executive.

- They can review and advise on Quality Assurance (QA)/Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) requirements.
- They can assist you with data collection, reporting and evaluation.
- They can support embedding successful projects into hospital operations post-competition.
- They will assist you to register for the SusQI workshop.

Site Clinical Lead

- The clinical lead will provide clinical leadership and guidance for clinical projects.
- The clinical lead will ensure projects consider balancing measures to monitor for adverse events.
- The clinical lead can advise on project design, implementation, evaluation (environmental, financial, clinical metrics) and provide guidance on HREC/QA applications.

Step 3: Register to attend the launch and showcase event – May 13th (optional)

The showcase will celebrate the entrants and winners of the 2025/2026 competition and officially launch the 2026/2027 competition.

Date: Wednesday 13th May

Time: 12-12:45pm

Venue: Online

[Register here](#)

Step 4: Register for the SusQI workshop (*highly recommended*)

The Sustainability in Quality Improvement (SusQI) workshop will introduce you to a structured approach for embedding environmental, social and financial sustainability into your project.

Delivered by the University of Melbourne's Sustainable Healthcare team, the workshop combines foundational Quality Improvement concepts, practical tools and guided project

planning to help you identify improvement opportunities, measure environmental impacts (including carbon), and design meaningful, implementable changes.

There will be no cost to attend the workshop.

Date: Wednesday 1st July

Time: 9am– 4.30pm (*registration from 8.30am*)

Venue: Woodward Conference Rooms
Level 10
Melbourne Law School
185 Pelham Street
Carlton

Registration for SusQI workshop

- The workshop will be open for complementary registration for at least one participant per project (additional participants can be considered based on workshop capacity).
- If you indicated on your competition registration for that you would like to attend the workshop your site lead will contact you to arrange registration.

Step 5: Get going with your project!

Your site leads and the University of Melbourne Sustainable Healthcare Team are able to assist you with challenges along the way.

Prior to contacting the University of Melbourne we ask you to discuss any issues with your site lead.

Step 6: Submit your completed project

Complete the Project Submission Form and submit by the closing date March 24th 2027. You will be asked to submit the following information about your project:

Introduction

Provide a short introduction about yourself, your project, and why you were inspired to create sustainable environmental change in your department.

What was the problem you tackled?

What was your SMART Goal?

What system factors contributed to the problem?

Who were the key stakeholders?

What was the intervention?

What impacts/outcomes were measured? How did you measure them? What balancing measures did you include to ensure you monitored for adverse events?

What challenges did you face? What enablers facilitated the change? What were the learning points?

What are the next steps with this project?

Points will be awarded in the following categories:

Environmental sustainability: What were the carbon savings from your project? (Please include your raw data and calculations)

Environmental sustainability: What were the waste reductions? (If possible, please specify what waste stream – reduced clinical waste by diverting to recycling, reduced clinical waste by using reusable equipment etc.)

Clinical outcomes: How did your project improve patient care? (include outcome data if available) What safety/balancing measures did you collect data on?

Financial sustainability: Have there been any financial savings? (please include your calculations)

Social sustainability: How did your project socially benefit patients, staff, or wider community?

Generalisability: Could this project be replicated in other areas of the hospital?

Please attach some photos of you and your team undertaking this project

Judging and awards

The projects will be judged by an expert panel and prizes will be awarded in the following categories:

- Best Health Service Project (winner for each health service)
- Best Overall Emissions Reduction Project
- Best Overall Clinical Project
- Best Overall Non-clinical Project

Projects will be evaluated on:

- Emissions reduction: How effectively the project reduces carbon emissions.
- Waste reduction: How effectively the project reduces waste.
- Clinical outcomes: How your project improved patient care.
- Social sustainability: How your project socially benefited patients, staff, or wider community.
- Economic sustainability: The financial savings.
- Generalisability: The potential of the project to be applied across different areas within your health service and beyond.

NHMRC funded research – The Hospital Sustainability Toolkit

The competition and SusQI workshop compose 2 mandatory components of the University of Melbourne's [Hospital Sustainability Toolkit](#). The University has been awarded an NHMRC grant to implement the toolkit and evaluate the environmental, clinical, and social impacts of competition projects, as well as changes in your knowledge, skills, and confidence before and after training. It will also assess how involvement influences your wellbeing, including burnout, climate distress, and engagement at work.

Toolkit components

Mandatory components (all sites)

[Health Service Environmental Sustainability Competition](#): Resources and implementation support for staff-led sustainability projects.

[Sustainability in Quality Improvement \(SusQI\) training](#): equipping staff with skills to implement projects delivering environmental and financial savings while maintaining high quality care.

Optional components

[Hospital Sustainability Project Tracker](#): an interactive dashboard with suggested interventions, measurement, and reporting tools (Mercy Health only).

[Education resources](#): integration of education materials on climate change and healthcare sustainability into clinical curricula (RMH only).

Research questions

The study will address five related questions:

- 1. Uptake and feasibility.** What is the reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance of the mandatory components and the optional components across participating hospitals and professions?
- 2. Workforce outcomes.** How do the competition and the training affect staff engagement, burnout, and climate distress over time?
- 3. Organisational and system outcomes.** What environmental, financial, clinical, and social benefits are achieved through sustainability projects implemented via the competition and through the implementation of each toolkit component at team, service, and organisation levels?

4. **Barriers and enablers.** Which contextual factors influence implementation of each component and how these vary across settings?
5. **Sustainability and scalability.** To what extent components are maintained and adapted beyond the study period and what lessons inform scale up across other health services and systems?

Expected benefits include reduced waste and emissions, net financial savings, maintained or improved quality of care, and stronger workforce capability for sustainable practice

Registration and consent for participation in the Competition and SusQI research

If you would like to participate in the research project please indicate your interest when registering your project and the research team will contact you with further information.

You may withdraw from the research at any time.

*Participation in the research is **not** required to take part in the Competition or attend the SusQI workshop.*

The research relating to the Project Tracker and Education Resources is separate from the Competition and workshop, and participants will not be expected to take part in it.

Surveys and focus groups

Sustainability in Quality Improvement (SusQI) training	
Pre-workshop survey	June 2026
Post-workshop survey	July 2026
Health Service Environmental Sustainability Competition	
Final Competition Project Report Form	March 2027
Post Competition Survey	April 2027
Focus Group	April 2027

Roles and Responsibilities of the University of Melbourne Team

The University of Melbourne Sustainable Healthcare team provides central coordination, training, and research support for the Health Service Environmental Sustainability Competition. The team is responsible for overall program design, delivery, and evaluation across participating health services. Key responsibilities include:

- Lead the design and annual delivery of the Competition, including development of resources, templates and communication materials, and ensuring consistency across all participating sites.
- Deliver the Sustainability in Quality Improvement (SusQI) workshop, provide access to training materials, and offer guidance on project planning, carbon measurement, quality improvement methods and evaluation tools.
- Provide ongoing advice, troubleshooting and clarification for Site and Clinical Leads, including support on project feasibility, data needs, ethics/QA processes, and alignment with organisational priorities.
- Oversee the NHMRC-funded research program evaluating the Hospital Sustainability Toolkit, including management of REDCap surveys, consent processes, interviews, focus groups and data collection.
- Develop and maintain project reporting templates, environmental and financial measurement tools, and the final competition report form. Aggregate and analyse data to assess environmental, financial, clinical and workforce outcomes across sites.
- Provide communication packs, branding and promotional materials. Liaise with site leads to ensure alignment with broader sustainability and implementation science initiatives and research.
- Organise the annual launch and showcase event in partnership with sites, support teams to share outcomes, and disseminate findings through reports, presentations and publications.
- Gather feedback from participants, Site Leads and Clinical Leads to refine the Competition model and support the sustainability and scalability of successful initiatives.

Contact details

Contact details for University of Melbourne staff

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