

A guide for eliminating single-use plastics

This guidance should be used to assist relevant persons and organisations in meeting the requirements of the Town of Bassendean Policy on Single-use Plastics & Balloons.

Current context:

The Town of Bassendean recognises the need to act to prevent damage from plastics to our environment. A Council policy on single-use plastics and balloons was endorsed by Council in March 2020.

All Town sponsored and managed events as well as internal operations are required to comply with the Town's Single-use Plastics & Balloons Policy 2.15. The Policy will require re-usable or compostable packaging to be used in place of single-use plastics, at Town sponsored events and within Town operations.

What is a single-use plastic?

Single-use plastics are disposable plastics including polystyrene that are designed to be used once and thrown away. Some examples include food related items: plastic wrap, cutlery, cups, stirrers, condiment sachets, plates and bowls; as well as single use items such as glitter, confetti and balloons.

What is wrong with plastic?

When plastics break down in the environment they do not biodegrade but rather break down into smaller and smaller pieces called 'micro-plastics'. These plastic pieces build up in the soil and the marine environment, being absorbed and metabolized by organisms. This incorporates plastic into the food web, which bio accumulates when one organism ingests another. As organisms do not have any effective way of eliminating micro plastics from their system, the concentrations increase. The concentration is further increased when one organism digests another.

The effects of micro-plastic bioaccumulation in the food chain are not yet fully understood however some wildlife are already showing declines due to plastic pollution. In particular, the marine environment where plastic pieces are more abundant than food and are often mistaken for food, choking the animal or simply causing starvation.

Balloons are single use plastic items that often cause harm when they are released to the environment. Balloons tend to travel longer distances and if particles are released in a marine environment are very often mistaken for food by wildlife.

Did you know? More plastic has been produced in the last 10 years than was produced in the 100 years prior to that, and it is estimated that the amount of plastic in our oceans will outweigh that of fish by the year 2050.

What can you do to reduce or eliminate single-use plastic?

- Avoid packaging waste altogether by buying in bulk and *bringing your own* container/wrap or cup with you.
- Use compostable packaging instead (see below for more information).
- Start small, choose key items which you know you use frequently and decide to purchase them plastic free.
- If you are arranging an event then make it plastic free, you will teach those around you the importance of reducing plastic.
- Choose to dine in where possible to avoid packaging.
- Choose brands that package their product in less packaging, every little bit does count.
- If you do have to purchase plastic items make sure you have the most up to date information on what can and cannot be recycled.
- Ask your local café if they will be switching to compostable packaging, if you are a business then request this from your suppliers.

As demand for alternatives to plastic increase, so too will the alternatives and new options for avoiding plastics. Never underestimate the influence your choices will have!

See the Town's website for information about how to recycle right.

How do I tell the difference between compostable plastics and conventional petroleum based plastics?

Compostable products are able to decompose to produce a non-toxic residue as they are made using plant based ingredients only. Some of these products now resemble conventional plastic quite closely.

Check out the symbols below to be sure that what you are buying is compostable.

Compostable products will always have a symbol **OR** will have the words 'PLA' with the recycling symbol and number '7' or 'Compostable' written on the product. PLA (polylactic acid) is a compostable bioplastic derived from plant sugars.

The terms 'biodegradable' and 'Degradable' are not indicators of a product being compostable. These terms simply mean they break down slightly faster than ordinary plastic products however, often still produce a noxious residue and are not accepted in the composting system.



Compostable



Home Compostable

AS 5810
ABAX 9999



Alternatives to single-use plastics

If you need this	Try this first	and then try this
Cups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reusable mugs and cups provided and a wash station set up on site. • Patrons encouraged to bring their own mug or coffee cup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compostable cups made from PLA, sugarcane or paper. • Only provide a lid when it is requested.
Plates and bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrons BYO plate/bowl • Re-usable crockery or re-usable plastic wares provided by vendors and washed on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compostable plates and bowls made from PLA, sugarcane or paper.
Cutlery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reusable cutlery provided and wash stations set up on site. • Patrons encouraged to bring their own reusable cutlery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compostable (PLA, sugarcane or paper) or wooden cutlery
Water bottles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking water facilities are made available on site • Patrons can bring their own bottle & refill on site • Reusable bottles available for purchase at the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glass • Paperboard cartons Aluminium or steel cans
Straws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrons encouraged to bring their own straw • Stainless steel straws to be washed and re-used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper straws
Bags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrons encouraged to bring their own reusable bag • Vendors sell re-usable bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper bags • Compostable bags • Boxes

Condiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a condiment station where people can apply sauces directly to their meal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide condiments in compostable packaging such as paper/bamboo or PLA trays.
Cling wrap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airtight containers • Silicone food wraps • Glass jars for food storage • Sandwich pockets • Bees wax wraps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compostable plant based soft plastic packaging and cling film. • Baking paper

If you are a vendor at an event then use the opportunity to sell some re-usable products such as water bottles, straws, cutlery sets and coffee cups.

Information for events

If you are managing an event, large or small in the Town of Bassendean please contact the Town's Recycling & Waste team for information about how to make it plastic free and waste wise.

It is important to let patrons know that you will be holding a plastic free event and to offer information about how they can avoid plastic. Use waste wise messaging in all event promotions such as "Bring your own re-usable coffee cup and water bottle".

Make sure alternatives such as wash-up stations and water refill points are accessible and clearly marked and advertise before the event so patrons know to bring their reusable items.

The basic rule to follow when planning waste wise events is the *Waste Hierarchy* which prioritises avoiding waste first, over other waste management mechanisms such as recycling or repurposing. Please refer to the image below which shows examples of each waste management mechanism.

Avoid waste packaging

- Bring your own cutlery, plate and cup.
- Choose re-usable options such as metal straws, reusable cups, cutlery and plates and set up a wash-up station.
- Utilise a re-usable cup/plate service.
- Set up a condiment station where people can help themselves to avoid single use sachets and tubs.
- Vendors to provide re-usable crockery & cutlery
- Dine in rather than taking food away.

Re-use where possible and recycle right

- Choose to re-use disposable items such as takeaway containers.
- Use organics bins to compost food, garden waste and compostable packaging.
- Make sure all waste goes into the right bin and make sure waste is recycled correctly.

Landfill
last!



Image adapted from Waste Authority WA (2019)

Still unsure? Please visit the Town's website
<http://www.bassendean.wa.gov.au> or contact the
Town's Waste team at
wasteservices@bassendean.wa.gov.au