

Eliminating single-use plastics

Single-use plastic is used on average for less than 12 minutes and then discarded, accounting for 50% of global pollution (European Commission 2016). Australians use approximately 1.5 kilograms of plastic each week, a third of which is single-use. CSIRO reported that plastic bags, bottles and balloons were among the most harmful pollutants threatening marine wildlife.

Moreland City Council has committed to reducing or eliminating single-use plastics in line with mounting global concern about the long term environmental damage of plastic pollution, particularly within local waterways and the marine environment. Single-use plastic will be reduced and eventually eliminated from Council events and festivals, events on council land, and across our services and facilities.

Councils around Australia have begun to ban single-use plastics at events. In November 2019, Victoria banned lightweight plastic shopping bags in line with the majority of Australia. Internationally, the European Union voted to ban 10 single-use plastic items by 2021. Globally, single-use plastic litter proves hazardous to one million seabirds and over 100,000 fish and marine mammals each year.

Introduced in 2018 and endorsed by Council as part of the **Plastic Wise Policy** in 2019, Council requires event and market organisers within Moreland to reduce or eliminate single-use plastics and encourage the use of reusable alternatives.

This information sheet aims to assist event organisers and stallholders through providing of a list of commonly used items and suggested alternatives to single-use plastics. Your support and leadership as an event organiser, stallholder, sponsor or volunteer is vital to reducing single-use plastics and litter within Moreland.

Why not just recycle it?

Although many single-use plastics at public events can be recycled, this is an energy intensive process for products that are on average used for less than 12 minutes. Environmentally, it is better to follow a waste hierarchy which preferences waste avoidance, reduction and reuse over recycling.



Biodegradable and compostable plastics – can these be used?

Biodegradable and compostable plant-based plastic are not supported by Council as the impact on marine wildlife is similar to that of petroleum based plastic products. These products only breakdown after prolonged exposure to high temperatures (over 50°C), such as occur in commercial grade composting facilities. Compostable plastic is no longer supported by Council as this product cannot yet be composted within Victoria, nor can it be recycled due to the type of plastic content.

When plastics break down, including biodegradable plastics, they do not decompose the way natural products do. Instead they break down into smaller and smaller particles becoming microplastics. These then enter the marine food chain and are consumed by marine wildlife.

How long does plastic remain in the ocean?



What can I use instead of single-use plastic?

Product	Best option	Next best option	Tips for success
Drinks in plastic bottles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking water available on site (e.g. taps, bench top water dispensers, portable water stations) • Customers BYO reusable bottles 	Drinks in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aluminium cans (recyclable) • Cardboard carton (recyclable) • Glass (recyclable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct people to taps and/or hydration stations • Water can be purchased in single serve cardboard cartons (like milk cartons) or in cans. Consider cooperating with other stallholders for a better wholesale price • Sell drinks in aluminium cans, cardboard cartons or glass bottles
Plastic cups and coffee cups (including paper, compostable and biodegradable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers BYO reusable cups • Provide reusable cups with a refundable deposit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold drinks - Paper cups (disposal in general waste due to wax lining) • Hot drinks – no single-use alternative currently exists. A policy exemption can be granted for coffee cups if no 'best option' solution can be found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only provide lids when requested • If disposable cups cannot be avoided, replacing plastic cups with paper cups reduces the amount of plastic in the environment.
Polystyrene cups and takeaway packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers BYO reusable cups or takeaway containers • Provide reusable cups with a refundable deposit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For hot drinks use single-use coffee cups as per the details above, noting a policy exemption will be needed. • Provide non-waxed cardboard takeaway containers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No polystyrene cups or takeaway packaging • If these cannot be avoided, paper cups/containers reduce the amount of plastic in the environment.
Plates and bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers BYO plate/bowl/container 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serviette, square of cardboard, cabbage leaf or other low impact option • Paper bowls/plates or cardboard (recyclable - when scraped clean) • Bamboo or Areca palm plates (compostable*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using disposables avoid products with plastic linings
Cutlery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider serving foods that don't need cutlery • Customers BYO cutlery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bamboo cutlery (compostable*) • Wooden cutlery (compostable*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask customers if they need cutlery rather than providing automatically
Stirring sticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide several teaspoons which can be washed and reused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wooden stirring sticks (compostable*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide metal teaspoons or wooden sticks
Straws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No straw • Customers BYO reusable straws • Sell reusable straws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper straw (compostable*) • Bamboo straw (compostable*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only provide if requested by a customer • Quality paper straws last longer and the dye doesn't run
Plastic bags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers BYO bags • Sell reusable bags (for the event or as a stallholder) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% recycled paper bags • FSC certified paper bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adding a small charge to cover any cost increase if customers choose to take a paper bag • There is a State Government ban on thin single-use shopping bags
Single serve condiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide condiments in large refillable containers (e.g. large tomato and soy sauce bottles) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that large serving containers such as bottles or pump packs are cleaned and sanitised before refilling
Balloons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace with paper lanterns, bunting, flags, banners or colourful streamers • Blow bubbles 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For stall decoration avoid the use of balloons • For promotional materials at events avoid balloons and promote re-use items
Bubble wrap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace with corrugated cardboard or brown packing paper mesh (e.g. GreenWrap) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use suggested alternatives (or similar) for vendor transport of goods • Ask customers if they need the product packaged rather than providing automatically

* A commercial composting facility is generally required to process these products. There is currently no facility processing these products in Victoria, items must therefore be disposed on in general waste