



Moreland
City Council

Plastic free guide for food businesses

Introduction

On average single-use plastics are used for less than 12 minutes before being discarded. Plastic pollution can have a devastating impact on our local waterways and oceans. The good news is, there are many ways to reduce our reliance on single-use packaging. This information sheet has some tips to help you reduce plastic waste in your food business.

Moreland City Council is committed to reducing single-use plastic, through implementing our Plastic Wise Policy developed in 2019.

What are single use plastics?

Single-use plastics are items made from plant or oil-based plastic that are used once or twice before being discarded.

Common single-use plastics at cafés, restaurants and food businesses include:

- Plastic takeaway containers
- Plastic cutlery
- Plastic straws
- Polystyrene food containers and coffee cups
- Take away coffee cups (all lined with oil or plant-based plastic)
- Water and soft drink bottles
- Plastic bags

Why go plastic free?

Single-use plastics are resource-heavy to create, using up energy and vast amounts of water.

Once the resources to create and transport these items are factored in, we see the carbon footprint they leave behind is not worth the few moments of convenience they offer.

Although many plastics can be recycled, this is also an energy intensive process compared to an item that can be washed and reused, such as a metal spoon, ceramic mug or reusable coffee cup. Many single-use plastics never even make it to the recycle bin because they are used on the go. Instead they pollute our streets, parks and oceans, threatening wildlife.

How can my business reduce single use plastics?

Being plastic free doesn't mean stopping all plastic use straight away. It's about reducing and finding alternatives where you can.

Food businesses can start to go plastic free by swapping out their single-use plastic items with alternatives or cutting them out of business operations altogether. Reducing these may be easier than you think. For example, you may be providing plastic cutlery with all delivered meals when typically, customers are eating at home and have their own cutlery.

Single use plastic alternatives can include:

- Swapping plastic straws and cutlery for paper, wood, bamboo or none
- Only offering takeaway cutlery when requested not as a standard practice
- Using single-use cardboard packaging for 'dry' take-away foods
- Using reusable plates and cutlery
- Accepting BYO vessels and containers for take away food
- Introducing a container swap scheme such as Reswap, Huskee Cup or The Cup Exchange.

Cost impacts

There are many ways to recoup the cost of using more sustainable packaging, while also providing incentives for customers to bring their own coffee cups or takeaway containers. Some examples are:

Gaining new customers through promoting your business on websites established to fight plastic waste, such as [Responsible Cafes](#); or [Trashless Takeaway](#):

- Charging extra for single-use containers
- Offering a discount for BYO re-usable containers
- Moving the location of the straws and take-away cutlery so that customers only use if needed.
- Selling reusable cups

Interested in finding out more about going plastic free?

If you would like more information about going a plastic free, please contact Moreland Council's Sustainable Communities Team.

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