

Single Use Plastic Policy

July 2025

Document Control

Date Created: 9 December 2019

Objective ID: A12180972

Date of Endorsement: 28 July 2025

Version No: 2

Policy Superseded by this Policy: Plastic Use Policy (2019)

Responsible Department: Strategic and Environmental Planning

Responsible Directorate: City Futures

Policy Type: Discretionary

Next Review: 30 June 2039

Document Compliance

Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

Greater Dandenong City Council Policies comply with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Climate Change Act 2017*, the Child Safe Standards contained in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, (Amended) the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the Overarching Governance Principles specified in 9(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Acknowledgment of Country

Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.

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1. POLICY PURPOSE

This Policy will guide Council in its commitment to reducing the use of single use and soft plastics across its corporate operations and service delivery, including at festivals, events and applicable activities on any land or building owned and/ or managed by Council.

2. BACKGROUND

Greater Dandenong City Council is committed to reducing the impact of plastic pollution on the environment, through demonstrating leadership in eliminating the use of single-use and other soft plastics across its corporate operations and service delivery. This commitment also applies to organisations or individuals conducting an event or activity on any land or in buildings owned and/ or managed by Council.

This Policy supports the Victorian Government's state-wide ban on select single use and soft plastic items and efforts to increase recycling of single use plastics including:

- Lightweight plastic shopping bags (November 2019)
- Single use plastic straws, cutlery, plates, stirrers, cotton buds and select expanded polystyrene food and drink containers (February 2023)
- Container Deposit Scheme (November 2023)

Council is committed to supporting and engaging with the community on the reduction of all single use and soft plastics beyond the scope of the Victorian Government regulations.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- Council operations (staff, contractors or other representatives)
- Festivals, events and other activities on any Council owned and/ or managed land, building or facility

The Policy covers single-use and soft plastic items used in purchasing, packaging, sales, distribution, transportation or clean-up practices associated with Council's corporate operations and at festivals, events and applicable activities on any land or building owned and/ or managed by Council and in Council facilities and services.

4. DEFINITIONS

Bioplastic – A term that can describe either bio-based or biodegradable plastic, including plastic items that are made with or without the use of petrochemical compounds.

- **Bio-based plastic:** Plastic made from natural bio-polymers – i.e. organic and renewable materials such as rice, starch, sugar cane, wheat or corn.

- **Biodegradable plastic:** Plastic that has the potential to break down into its natural components over a period of time. These products can be made from natural and/or fossil fuel-based materials.

Carry bag - A plastic bag of any size that you use to carry the things you have bought or are given.

For the purpose of this Policy, this definition includes both thin (35 microns) and heavier weight disposable or limited use plastic bags, including degradable, biodegradable and compostable bags.

Council event – Any event organised by Council

Community event – any event delivered for community for free. Any event organised by a community member or a community group (such as a school or not-for-profit organisation).

Commercial event - Any event organised by a business (such as an event company) conducted for profit.

Council buildings – Buildings, or venues and facilities owned and/ or managed by Council.

Event – Any planned activity that occurs in a certain place, during a certain time, which involves a gathering of people and has some level of impact on the immediate surroundings.

For the purpose of this Policy, it includes all civic, commercial and community events such as markets, festivals, ceremonies, exhibitions, expos, meetings, functions, workshops, information sessions, conferences, parties, competitive sporting events, and other organised sporting and recreational events.

Micro plastic – Microplastics are plastic items that are smaller than 5 mm and can have a variety of shapes such as particles or fibres. Based on their origin, they are generally divided up into primary microplastics, such as microbeads in face wash and toothpaste, or secondary microplastics, such as fragments from plastic bags or fibres from textiles.

Plastic – Polyethylene, polystyrene and polypropylene made from petrochemical compounds, including degradable and biodegradable products made from these compounds.

Plastic bottles – A bottle constructed from plastic that is used to carry drinking water or any other beverage designed or intended to be discarded after consumption.

Polystyrene – Also known as Styrofoam, a light, usually white plastic used especially for putting around delicate objects inside containers to protect them from damage, or for putting around something to prevent it from losing heat.

Single-use plastics – Any disposable plastic or polystyrene item that is designed to be used only once or a short period of time before it is discarded. These plastics include, but are not limited to plastic bags, cups, bowls, plates, cutlery, straws, bottled water, sachets (e.g. sauces), containers, packaging and other similar items.

For the purpose of this Policy, it also applies to balloons, single-use disposable cups and lids used for hot or cold drinks, e.g. takeaway coffee cups, plastic glitter, glow sticks and confetti, and single-use or disposable plastic promotional items and giveaways.

Soft plastics – Soft or flexible plastics are any plastics that can be easily scrunched into a ball or broken when crushed by hand and include, among others, single-use plastic bags, corn starch / cellulose plastic multi-use shopping bags, straws, some types of food packaging and balloons.

Sport or recreational activity – Any regular or organised sporting or recreational activity occurring at Council owned and/ or managed sites, including those run by community sporting clubs.

Takeaway container – Used for serving or transporting prepared, ready-to-consume hot and cold foods, including deli containers.

Waste hierarchy – The waste hierarchy ranks waste management options in order of their general environmental desirability. Rankings are: Avoid (most preferred); Reduce; Reuse; Recycle and Dispose (least preferred).

5. POLICY

Policy Vision

To reduce the use of single use and soft plastics across Council's corporate operations and at any festival, event or other activity on any land or building owned and/ or managed by Council.

Policy Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To reduce, eliminate and transition away from single use and soft plastics across Council's corporate operations.
- To reduce the impact of single use and soft plastic pollution on Council land, waterways and the impact of microplastics on animals, the food chain and human health.
- To reduce the distribution and use of single use and soft plastics by organisations or individuals conducting an event or activity on any land or building owned and/ or managed by Council.
- To support the Victorian Government's ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags and single use plastics and support the container deposit scheme which seek to reduce pollution, and the amount of plastic waste sent to landfill, encourage better recycling outcomes, and facilitate alternatives to single-use plastic products.

- To go beyond the Victorian Government bans, and further reduce the use of single use plastics for all operations and activities occurring on Council owned and/ or managed land and buildings
- To engage with and support the Dandenong Market and its traders, and other corporate operators on Council owned and/ or managed land in transitioning away from the use of single-use plastic bags and other single-use or soft plastics and encourage suitable alternatives.
- To engage and educate community groups, sports clubs and the broader community to transition away and reduce single use and soft plastics.

Policy Details

As of February 2023, these problematic single-use plastics are banned from sale or supply in Victoria:

- Single use plastic bags of 35 micrometres (μm) thick or less
- Plastic drinking straws (unless needed for medical reasons, see 'Exemptions' on page 5)
- Plastic cutlery
- Plastic plates
- Plastic drink stirrers
- Cotton bud sticks
- Expanded polystyrene food service items
- Expanded polystyrene drink containers

In addition to the State ban of single use plastic items above, this Policy deems the following items should not be distributed, sold, provided or used, and should be replaced with suitable alternatives:

- Single-use plastic carry bags (of any thickness)
- Balloons (latex, mylar (foil) and cloudbuster)
- Single-use plastic and polystyrene plates and bowls
- Single use plastic and polystyrene take away food containers (that transport hot and cold foods, including deli containers)
- Plastic bottled beverages
- Single use coffee cups for dine in customers (where in accordance with lease agreements)
- Single use plastic tablecloths
- Plastic glitter, glow sticks and confetti
- Single use or disposable promotional items or giveaways

This Policy is in place to reduce the use of single use plastics and other soft plastics across the following areas:

- Council's corporate operations and delivery of services
- Council events

- Community or commercial events or activities held on land and/or in building's owned and managed by Council
- Registered community organisations or service providers operating out of Council owned buildings or facilities
- All registered sporting clubs using council owned land and/or facilities
- All leisure centre operators of Council owned facilities
- Commercial businesses operating on Council owned and/ or managed land (where in accordance with lease agreements)

It is a requirement that:

- Free access to drinking water must be provided at all events and activities, and within Council owned and/ or managed buildings.
- Plastic bottled water is not to be provided at civic functions where potable drinking water facilities are available. Reusable plastic portable water dispensers are allowed.

Suitable alternatives for the items included in the Policy should:

- a) Contain no plastic in its composition (biodegradable plastics, degradable plastics, renewable plastics, and bioplastics are not suitable)
- b) Be available;
- c) Be fit for purpose; and
- d) Be cost suitable.

Exemptions

The following exemptions apply:

- Events and activities occurring on Council owned or managed land that do not need an event permit, hire agreement, lease or tenancy agreement
- Single use and soft plastics that are necessary to meet health, safety and emergency response requirements
- Single use and soft plastics that are required for people with special needs
- Single use and soft plastics where there is no other practical alternative product or distribution method available, as agreed and approved by Council
- Plastics where alternative items are cost prohibitive or restrict operational revenue, as agreed and approved by Council
- The Dandenong Market and all private traders within *
- Commercial businesses operating on Council owned land and/ or managed land **

*Council will work with the Dandenong Market to undertake various engagement and education activities to increase the knowledge of all stakeholders of the impacts of single use plastics, and alternative options to replace plastics.

**Council will seek to include clauses in new contracts and lease agreements that minimise/ eliminate the use of single use plastics in commercial businesses operating on Council owned and/ or managed land. Council will also investigate how to support current leasing businesses to trial initiatives that increase the uptake of reusables.

Council will work with all stakeholders bound by the requirements of this Policy. Where an exemption is required, Council will provide guidance to the individual or group on opportunities to reduce the use and disposal of the relevant single use plastic item until its can be eliminated or substituted in the future.

Should non-compliance occur, Council will support organisations or individuals who need to comply with this Policy. However, if there is poor adherence to this Policy such as repeat non-compliance, Council reserves the right to take further action that may restrict future activities or operations.

Implementation

The implementation and education regarding the Policy will be supported through a range of operational and educational resources which will:

- Support areas of Council that generate significant plastic waste to develop alternative practices and behaviour.
- Continue to implement a whole of Council awareness and education program on Council's commitment to reduce single-use and other soft plastic materials.
- Promote Plastic Use Policy guides for target groups and provide updated lists of alternatives to the plastic items included in the Policy.
- Seek to procure goods that minimise single use plastic, and encourage suppliers to reduce single use plastic in their products.
- Promote a clear set of festivals and events guidelines that will help deliver and promote plastic free Council or community events.
- Incorporate the reduction of single-use and soft plastics, into relevant new contracts and lease agreements for Council owned and/ or managed community facilities and leisure centres.
- Work closely with sports clubs and community groups located in Greater Dandenong, to reduce the use of single-use and soft plastics, through education and incorporating this initiative into the terms and conditions of the relevant hire agreements and grant funding agreements.
- Seek to include clauses in new contracts and lease agreements that minimise/ eliminate the use of single use plastics in commercial businesses operating on Council owned and/ or managed land.
- Engage with commercial businesses operating on Council owned and/ or managed land to actively encourage, support and incentivise takeaway customers to use reuseable cups and containers.

- Develop annual education and engagement plans commencing in 2026 that engages commercial businesses operating on Council owned and/ or managed land to reduce single use plastics in their operations, including the Dandenong Market.
- Support Dandenong Market and its traders to implement its own approach to reducing the impacts of single-use and soft plastics.
- Reduce single-use plastics and soft plastics used for services, such as catering and community engagement.
- Promote the objectives of the Policy at relevant induction evenings and in person at major Council events.

Waste Hierarchy Approach

Greater Dandenong supports the internationally recognised Waste Hierarchy. The waste hierarchy is an order of preference and states that waste should be managed in accordance with the hierarchy, with avoidance being the most preferred option and disposal being the least.

The EPA's waste hierarchy approach will be used as a key reference tool to guide the implementation of the Policy and supporting the transition towards reducing and eliminating single-use plastic.



Education

The benefits of eliminating and reducing single-use plastics will be communicated to the community through an ongoing education and awareness program, which will be run between Council's Waste Education and Sustainability Planning units.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Department	Roles and Responsibilities	Timelines
Councillors	<p>Leadership group of elected community representatives.</p> <p>Policy custodian and stewards for the endorsed updated Policy and its implementation.</p>	Ongoing
CEO and Executive Team (ET)	<p>Leadership group comprising of the CEO and Executive Directors. All Executive Directors are Policy custodians.</p> <p>Ensures Council meets the endorsed objectives and standards within the Policy.</p> <p>Promote and support implementation across the organisation and the broader community.</p>	Ongoing
Strategic and Environmental Planning	<p>Provides advice, guidance and support across Council's operations and business units to ensure that they comply with the Policy.</p> <p>Support implementation through the provision of operational guidance, resources and facilitate education and engagement programs.</p>	Ongoing
Waste Services	Responsible for reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill and minimising the impact of plastic pollution.	Ongoing
Procurement Services	Support implementation and provide guidance documents for Council's procurement and tender processes.	Ongoing
Civic Facilities	<p>Responsible for the hire and booking conditions of all Council owned buildings available for temporary hire.</p> <p>Responsible for the ordering, supply and provision of items used in all civic buildings such as food, beverage and materials.</p>	Ongoing
Festivals and Events	Support implementation for festivals and events, and encourage community events to comply with the Policy	Ongoing
Sport and Recreation	<p>Responsible for the development and implementation of agreements between management agencies, sporting clubs and council.</p> <p>Ensures all leisure centre contracts and agreements and community lease/ license agreements are in line with Council objectives and complement broader community outcomes.</p> <p>Encourage sporting clubs to comply with the Policy.</p>	Progressive implementation in line with lease and contract agreements

Community Development	Responsible for the coordination of Council's community funding program. Provides funding, including the implementation of conditions with Council's community grants program.	Progressive implementation in line with update/renewal of grant conditions and contracts etc
Governance, Legal and Risk	Develops and negotiates leases for use of Council's properties. Ensure all new and renewed leases are negotiated and prepared, and comply with commercial standards, legislation and Council policies.	Progressive implementation in line with update/renewal of permits, leases, licences and contracts.

7. REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Reporting	Executive Team
Monitoring	Strategic and Environmental Planning is responsible for the monitoring of this Policy.
Review	This Policy will be reviewed by the Team Leader - Sustainability Planning every four (4) years or where required under relevant legislation.
Stakeholder Engagement	Governance Legal and Risk Executive Team Festival and Events Waste Services Creative and Engaged City

8. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Consideration of Climate Change and Sustainability (Climate Change Act 2017)

According to research completed by the State Government's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, (DCCEEW), Australians produce around 100 kg of plastic waste, per person each year. A third of which is single use plastic. As a nation, that equates to 2.5 million tonnes of single use plastic waste, with only 13 percent being recovered and 84 percent going to landfill. (DCCEEW 2021). Globally, single-use plastic accounts for 85 percent of marine pollution (United Nations Environment Program 2021). It is estimated that by 2050, plastic in the ocean will outweigh fish (DCCEEW 2021).

Single-use plastics have many environmental impacts across their lifecycle, from the resources required to manufacture and transport the product, to the end-of-life disposal impacts. They cause large levels of litter and waste which requires cleaning up and disposal at a cost to Council. In addition, plastic breaks down into smaller pieces to become micro-plastics, which is being ingested by wildlife and is subsequently found in the food chain and the food ingested by people, which is a growing human health concern.

As a result, all levels of government are taking action to reduce single use plastics and are beginning to see improvement since their introduction. For example, the Victorian Government's *Environment Protection Amendment Bill 2019* saw the banning of lightweight

plastic shopping bags by all retailers in November 2019. This has seen a decline of single-use HDPE plastic bag consumption by 90% since 2016–17 (DAWE 2021). The State Government also implemented a ban on plastic drinking straws, drink stirrers, cutlery, plates, cotton buds as well as food ware and cups made from expanded polystyrene in February 2023. The ban applies to all businesses and organisations in Victoria.

In an effort to further reduce single use items and shift behaviours around reducing and recycling, in November 2023 the Victorian Government's Container Deposit Scheme was rolled out to target containers such as soft drink and water bottles. The scheme aims to divert 80 percent of material from landfill by 2030. In the first 12 months of its operation, one third of all containers produced have been recycled through the scheme, 30 percent of those containers being plastic.

Reducing the use of single-use plastics by Council and the community aligns with the Greater Dandenong City Council's expectations and environmental values, as well as the community consultation outcomes on Council's climate, sustainability and environmental strategies. This Policy directly responds to Council's Declaration on a Climate and Ecological Emergency, and Council's *Climate Change Emergency Strategy 2020-2030*.

Legislation

- the *Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Single-Use Plastic Items) Regulations 2022* outlines the Single Use Plastic items that are banned, exemptions and who this ban applied to.
- the *Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) (Container Deposit Scheme) Regulations 2022*, outlines which containers are eligible, requirements for first suppliers, and exempt containers.
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Amended)*
- *Environment Protection Act 2017*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *General Environmental Duty 2017*
- *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Public Records Act 1973*

Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- *Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-2030*
- *Council Plan 2021-25*
- *Imagine 2030 Community Plan*
- *Leasing and Licensing of Commercial Properties Policy*
- *Procurement Policy 2021 -2025*
- *Sustainability Strategy 2016-2030*
- *Waste and Litter Strategy 2015-2020*

Administrative Updates

It is recognised that from time to time, circumstance may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, the change to an existing policy or document referred to in this policy and minor updates to legislation and the like which does not have a material impact. All changes or updates which materially alter this policy must be by resolution of Council.

Date	Update