

Single-Use Plastic Free Events Policy

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CONTENTS

1. OBJECTIVES.....	3
2. BACKGROUND	3
3. SCOPE	3
4. DEFINITIONS	4
5. POLICY.....	4
6. EXEMPTIONS.....	5
7. TRANSITION PERIOD.....	5

1. Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to set out Council's commitment to eliminate single-use plastic at events run by Council and events held on Council land, in Council buildings, Council venues or on roads managed by Council.

2. Background

Darebin City Council's Single-use Plastic Free Events policy has been developed in response to a resolution passed by Council on June 5th, 2017 which requires:

Officers [to] develop a policy and action plan, with the aim of eliminating the use of single-use plastic bags, all plastic glasses, straws, cutlery, food boxes and coffee cups at Council events. In addition, the policy and action plan should be actioned by 31 December 2017. The policy should consider the elimination of single use items used at all Council run events, including but not limited to organised or formal sports and recreational events, markets conducted on Council land, buildings and or roads managed by Council. In addition, Officers develop and implement a policy to ensure stallholder guidelines reflect the changes above.

Single-use plastic has many negative environmental, social and economic impacts. It is estimated that annually Australians use four to six billion single-use plastic bags alone, with only 3% of these being recycled and 80 million of these ending up as litter. Globally, at least 8 million tonnes of mishandled plastic waste washes into our oceans and rivers each year.

Plastic does not biodegrade; rather it breaks down into ever-smaller pieces. Recent evidence shows that microplastics – tiny plastic fibres and fragments – are being found in marine and human food chains and their impacts are a growing concern.

Council has made a commitment to minimise the harmful effects of single-use plastic items by eliminating their use from Council run events and events held at Council sites.

3. Scope

The policy applies to Council staff, contractors or other Council representatives engaged in the operation of Council business; all events and individuals or organisations planning, organising, running, and/or approving events, conducted in or on Council owned or managed sites. This includes, but is not limited to, all civic, commercial or community events; all large and small scale events, meetings, functions, workshops, markets, festivals, expos, parties, information sessions, conferences and organised/formal sport or recreational events.

The policy covers single-use plastic items used in purchasing, packaging, sales, distribution, transportation or clean-up practices associated with events.

The policy exempts single-use plastic items necessary to meet health and safety requirements, or where there are no other practical alternative products or distribution methods available. All exemptions require prior, written General Manager approval.

4. Definitions

Civic event – any event organised by Council staff.

Council sites – Buildings, venues, land, roads or any other location owned or managed by Council.

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

Contracted Leisure facilities – include Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Darebin Community Sports Stadium, Darebin International Sports Centre, Sullivan Stadium, Northcote Golf Course and Bundoora Golf Course.

Single-use plastic bag – a type of disposable bag or pouch, often used only once or for a short period of time, made of thin, flexible, plastic film, used for containing and transporting goods.

Single-use plastic items – any disposable plastic products used only once or for a short period of time, including but not limited to plastic bags, cups, bowls, plates, cutlery, take away containers, bottled water, cling wrap, straws and balloons and other similar items. For the purpose of this Policy, it also applies to disposable paper (coffee) cups with plastic linings and/or lids.

5. Policy

Organisations or individuals planning, organising, running and/or approving Council events or events conducted at Council sites must ensure the following event requirements are met:

- Single-use plastic bags are not to be used, sold or distributed for transportation or promotional purposes;
- Single-use plastic plates, bowls, cups, straws, cutlery and take away food containers are not to be used, sold or distributed;
- Bottled water is not to be provided, sold or distributed by Council. Alternative, free access to water must be provided;
- Single-use disposable cups and lids are not to be used, sold or distributed by Council;
- All avoidable plastic packaging, including cling wrap, plastic bags or similar must not be used in the purchase, sale, distribution and transport of food or goods;
- Balloons are not to be used, sold or distributed;

- Event materials are to be reused where possible (including event signage and promotional banners and flags);
- The event site or venue must be left litter free and returned to pre-event conditions; and
- Event organisers must play a key role in educating and guiding their event staff and audience on single-use plastic free practices. This includes considering whether single-use plastic items are needed in the first instance, providing useful information, and promoting reusable alternatives.

Sporting clubs, food and other vendors at festivals and others participating in Council events on/in Council land/buildings are permitted to provide, sell or distribute single-use bottled water and disposable cups. However, they must promote and consider using and supplying/selling reusable options (eg: providing jugs and reusable glasses for patrons' water use, promote/sell/supply refillable drinking bottles or reusable cups etc); provide a discount to those choosing reusable cups (eg: bringing their own); and display promotional materials on reusable options.

Council officers will support and assist organisations or individuals organising an event to comply with this policy, however, if there is poor adherence to this policy, officers may recommend that these events not be supported or approved by Council in the future. Events on Council managed land will need to commit to comply with the policy before any Council sponsorship for that event is approved.

6. Exemptions

Exemptions to this policy may be made for health and safety reasons or where there is no other practical alternative product or distribution method available. All exemptions require prior, written General Manager approval.

The exemption process, including keeping of exemption records, will be established by Environment and Community Outcomes following adoption of this policy.

7. Policy Commencement and Transition Period

This policy will commence once approved by Council.

A transition period will apply to enable Council Teams and Departments to fully implement their Single-use Plastic Action Plans. The transition period that applies is identified in each of the Council Departmental Action Plans.

An initial two year transition period from the approval date of this policy specifically applies to sporting clubs, and leisure contracted facilities to allow for the transition to the Policy requirements. During this transition period Council officers will work with these clubs and facilities to assist in planning. This transition period policy condition will be monitored and reviewed at the first policy review.

