



# PLASTIC FREE STONNINGTON

## COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Your guide to holding plastic-free events  
in the City of Stonnington



City of  
STONNINGTON

## Introduction

The City of Stonnington is committed to reducing and eventually eliminating unnecessary single-use plastics from our operations, services, meetings and events.

Single-use plastics are a major problem because they:

- » Are often used for only a short period but remain in the environment for a long time
- » Pollute the environment, harm wildlife and contaminate our food and water
- » Are difficult or unviable to recycle and cause issues when incorrectly placed in the recycling bin

Our **Plastic Free Policy** was introduced in 2022 and outlines new requirements for organising and running events and meetings at Council venues and on Council land. These requirements will help reduce litter and waste to landfill, reduce demand for single-use plastic items, and increase community awareness about the impact of single-use plastics.

This guide has been developed to provide tips and advice for holding plastic-free events in Stonnington and to support the community to comply with our Policy.



## Who does this apply to?

The City of Stonnington's Plastic Free Policy applies to all individuals, groups, businesses and organisations involved in planning, organising and running events on Council land or at Council managed venues – where approval is required.

This includes community groups, stallholders, vendors, sponsors, volunteers, service providers and other community members who are onsite as part of an event.

The kind of events that are covered by the Policy include parties, meetings, festivals, markets, functions, community gatherings, workshops, sport events and other activities. The Policy does not apply to private use of Council parks or open spaces or when visiting a Council library.












## What are single-use plastics?

Single-use plastic items are designed to be used once or for a short period of time before being thrown away. Common examples include straws, cutlery, bags, wrappers, takeaway cups and containers. Single-use plastics can appear at all stages of an event – from purchasing, transporting, packaging, distributing, promoting and cleaning up.



## Which single-use plastics are banned?

The single-use plastics covered in our Policy have been grouped into two categories. We have committed to eliminating Category 1 items by February 2023 to align with the [Victorian state government ban](#), and Category 2 items by February 2024 so that we can have maximum impact.

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2
 <p>Polystyrene cups and food containers</p>	 <p>Plastic bowls and cups</p>
 <p>Plastic cutlery</p>	 <p>Non-recyclable plastic containers</p>
 <p>Plastic straws</p>	 <p>Plastic wrap</p>
 <p>Plastic drink stirrers</p>	 <p>Bubble wrap</p>
 <p>Plastic plates</p>	 <p>Single-use water bottles</p>
 <p>Plastic bags</p>	 <p>Disposable coffee cups and lids</p>
 <p>Balloons</p>	 <p>Single serving sachets and sweets</p>

While our Policy does not include every single single-use plastic item, we always encourage avoiding them where possible.

## What does the Policy mean for your event?

With a little extra planning, single-use plastics are easy to avoid! Start by asking yourself some simple questions:

### Avoid and reduce

- ? Do I really need this, or can I avoid it altogether?
- ? Can I talk to suppliers about avoiding packaging?
- ? Are there package free options (like loose fruit and vegetables or bulk treats) or can I purchase in bulk to reduce overall waste?

### Reuse

- ? What reusable alternatives are there to single-use plastics?
- ? Could I use reusable cups and plates and wash them?
- ? Are there second-hand reusable items I can purchase to save money?

### Recycle

- ? If I can't find or avoid an item, or access a reusable alternative, are there recyclable alternatives?
- ? Have I checked [stonnington.vic.gov.au/A-Zwaste](https://stonnington.vic.gov.au/A-Zwaste) to find out what items can and cannot be recycled in the City of Stonnington?



**“If you cannot reuse or recycle an item, it’s always best to avoid it in the first place!”**

## What about compostable items?

Compostable products need to meet Australian Composting Standards. These can be paper or cardboard products, or bioplastics (plastics made from natural resources) made from materials such as potato and corn starch.

While some compostable items can go the City of Stonnington's **food and green waste service**, many items such as 'compostable' cups and food packaging are not accepted. These items require specific conditions to break down, often end up in landfill or as contamination in recycling, and behave in a similar way to conventional plastics if littered.

It's always best to choose reusable items, however the following items may be composted if your event has access to a Council food and green waste service:







- » Paper towel (small amounts)
- » Newspaper (small quantities)
- » Napkins
- » Lime green certified compostable liners (AS 4736)

Visit [www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/A-Zwaste](http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/A-Zwaste) for a full list of what items can and cannot go in Council's food and green waste service. You can also find out what items can be taken home for composting in your own worm farm, bokashi bin or compost system!



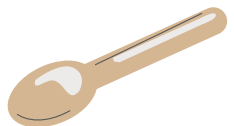
# How to organise a plastic-free event

## CHECKLIST FOR EVENT ORGANISERS

- |   |                |  |
|---|----------------|--|
|    | <b>Read</b>    | Review our <a href="#">Plastic Free Policy</a> along with the booking requirements, permit or application process for your event.  |
|    | <b>Plan</b>    | Design out single-use plastics. Write down what items you will use when planning, running and cleaning up after your event or meeting. Check out the table below and swap single-use plastic items with our recommended alternatives. If you do use single-use items, make sure they are recyclable by checking out <a href="http://stonnington.vic.gov.au/A-Zwaste">stonnington.vic.gov.au/A-Zwaste</a> . |
|  | <b>Check</b>   | Find out what reusable crockery is available at your chosen venue, where to wash your dishes, where the drinking fountains or taps are, and what waste and recycling options are available.  |
|  | <b>Inform</b>  | Let everyone involved in your event (whether they are stallholders, contractors, sponsors, party guests or meeting attendees) know what products are acceptable and how waste must be managed.   |
|  | <b>Educate</b> | Display signage at your event to promote reusables and show what items belong in each bin. Download from <a href="#">Council's website</a>   |
|  | <b>Clean</b>   | Ensure that the venue or site is left clean, and that any waste generated from the event is managed appropriately.   |

## ✓ CHECKLIST FOR EVENT SUPPLIERS, CONTRACTORS OR CATERERS

- ✓ **Review** Read through our [Plastic Free Policy](#) to ensure that you are compliant.
- ✓ **Provide** Offer compliant alternatives to single-use plastics to hirers from the outset. Where possible, provide reusable options, like containers with lids, and ensure that you understand what can be recycled or composted in the City of Stonnington by checking out [stonnington.vic.gov.au/A-Zwaste](https://stonnington.vic.gov.au/A-Zwaste).
- ✓ **Remove** Remove single-use plastics from your offering where possible. This will assist you to prepare for the [Victorian state government ban](#) and protect the local environment.
- ✓ **Consider** Think about providing a swap system for regular hirers or a next day drop-off or collection system for reusable items.
- ✓ **Educate** Display signage at your event to promote reusables and show what items belong in each bin. Download from [Council's website](#)













# Alternatives to single-use plastics








Where possible, the City of Stonnington encourages avoiding waste in the first place. However, we understand that this is not always possible. In these instances, we recommend selecting a reusable, recyclable or compostable alternative.

This table highlights single-use plastics that are not allowed to be used at events on Council land or at Council-managed venues and lists acceptable alternatives.




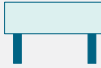

## Category 1 (banned from February 2023)

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC	BEST OPTION	OTHER OPTIONS
 Polystyrene cups	Reusable ceramic, glass or plastic cups or bottles	Recyclable aluminium drink cans or plastic bottles
 Polystyrene food containers	Reusable containers with lids	Recyclable cardboard boxes, glass jars or aluminium trays
 Plastic cutlery	Reusable metal cutlery	Reusable plastic cutlery or wooden cutlery
 Plastic straws	Reusable metal, silicone or bamboo straws	Paper straws
 Plastic drink stirrers	Reusable metal teaspoons	Wooden drink stirrers
 Plastic plates	Reusable ceramic or plastic plates	Napkins
 Plastic bags	Reusable cloth and heavy-duty bags	Recyclable paper bags or boxes
 Balloons	Reusable decorations such as paper lanterns, flags and banners, streamers	Bubbles for entertainment

## Category 2 (banned from February 2024)

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC	BEST OPTION	OTHER OPTIONS
 Plastic bowls and cups	Reusable ceramic, glass or plastic bowls and cups	Recyclable aluminium drink cans
 Non-recyclable plastic containers	Reusable containers with lids	Recyclable cardboard boxes or aluminium trays
 Plastic wrap	Reusable airtight containers, metal or glass cloches, reusable silicone or wax wraps	Recyclable aluminium foil
 Bubble wrap	Newspaper, paper or cardboard (repurposed if possible)	Recyclable corrugated cardboard packaging
 Single-use water bottles	Reusable bottles and cups	Recyclable aluminium drink cans
 Disposable coffee cups and lids	Reusable ceramic or glass cups or mugs	Reusable plastic cups with lids
 Single serving sachets and sweets	Refillable containers, bottles or dispensers (purchase refills in bulk) and loose treats (purchase in bulk packaging or loose)	Recyclable sugar, sauce, salt and pepper containers

## Other items to avoid

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC	BEST OPTION	OTHER OPTIONS
 Glitter	Do not use	Flower petals (for outside events) or leaf confetti
 Wipes	Reusable washable cloths and tea towels	Paper towel (where composting services can accept)
 Party bags	Fill guests' reusable containers or cloth bags with loose treats	Recyclable cardboard boxes or paper bags with loose treats
 Single-use plastic cloth	Reusable fabric tablecloth	Multi-use plastic cover
 Glowsticks/plastic candles	Avoid wherever possible	Reusable solar fairy lights for decoration

## Tips?

- » Encourage event attendees to BYO wherever possible
- » Only provide wooden cutlery and paper straws on request
- » Try to serve food that does not require cutlery
- » Look out for plastic linings or coated cardboard – these products are not recyclable and need to be avoided

## Did you know?

While it may look like regular cardboard, when cardboard is used to hold liquids or frozen food is usually coated to keep it from getting wet. This can include takeaway containers that look like they are plain brown cardboard. If cardboard has a thin or waxy plastic coating, then it is coated.



## What if I don't want to buy reusable items?

There are a number of event and party hire businesses online which provide a range of options to suit different budgets. Many of these are also listed on the [Party Kit Network](#). For larger events, hire reusable plates and cups with washing services. You may also be able to source items through your local [Buy Nothing Group](#) or simply borrow from friends and family.

If you are purchasing items, we recommend second-hand items where possible. Visit a [local op-shop](#) or shop online through sites such as [Gumtree](#), [eBay](#) or [Facebook Marketplace](#).



## Exemptions

While the City of Stonnington expects compliance for Category 1 items by February 2023 and Category 2 items by February 2024, we realise that there are sometimes good reasons to use single-use plastic items.

Blanket exemptions (no approval required) apply for:

- » Health, safety and accessibility reasons
- » Food safety or OHS requirements
- » Use in heatwaves or emergency events

Examples:

- » Straws or other single-use items used for accessibility
- » Plastic gloves used to handle food
- » Plastic bin bags for garbage
- » Certified compostable caddy liners or bin bags for food and green waste

Upon application for an exemption, sports clubs, food and other vendors at festivals and events in Council-managed venues or Council land may be permitted to provide, sell or distribute single-use bottled water and disposable cups. However, Council recommends:

- » Promoting and considering using and supplying/selling reusable options
- » Providing a discount to those who bring their own cups; and/or
- » Displaying promotional materials for reusable options.

Conditional exemptions (approval required) are assessed on a case-by-case basis. To apply for an exemption, fill out [this form](#) to provide evidence that you need the exemption.





## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Does this Policy only apply to external events and venues?**

No, this is being applied across internal Council activities, operations and services as well. We don't expect our community to do anything we aren't doing ourselves!

### **Does the City of Stonnington supply signage to tell patrons what can go in each bin?**

At larger events that use Council services, we supply signage for the bins. We can also supply PDF versions of signage that assist patrons to sort their waste correctly.

### **Are takeaway coffee cups and lids recyclable?**

No, coffee cups and their lids need to go in the garbage bin as they are not recyclable. Coffee cups are lined with plastic to make them liquid-proof and this lining means they cannot be recycled. We always recommend reusable cups.

### **Is it going to be more expensive to switch to a reusable option?**

In some cases, it may cost a little bit more to purchase initially, but generally it is cheaper long-term as durable items can be used many times. Second-hand stores and op-shops usually have a good range of reusable kitchen crockery and utensils at very affordable prices.

### **Can food and drink be served in reusable containers provided by patrons?**

According to [Sustainability Victoria](#), [Food Standards Australia New Zealand \(FSANZ\)](#) advises there are no requirements in the Food Standards Code in Australia preventing businesses or vendors from letting customers use their own containers.

Businesses and vendors are advised to check and make sure that the container or cup is clean, that it will not contaminate the product or other food or surfaces, and that it is fit for purpose. Supporting and encouraging customers to use their own reusable items is very important to reducing single-use plastics

### **How do I wash crockery and cutlery to comply with the National Food Safety Standards?**

It is important that all reusable items are properly washed in hot soapy water. Visit [foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafetyhub](https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafetyhub) for detailed information.



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For further information or support, contact the City of Stonnington's  
Waste Education Officers at [environment@stonnington.vic.gov.au](mailto:environment@stonnington.vic.gov.au)  
or visit [stonnington.vic.gov.au/waste/](http://stonnington.vic.gov.au/waste/).