

## Plastic Use Policy

Policy Endorsement:	Endorsement required by Council		
Policy Superseded by this Policy	Not Applicable		
Directorate:	City, Planning, Design & Amenity		
Responsible Officer:	Environmental Planner		
Policy Type:	Discretionary		
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Review Period:	Every 2 Years	Next Review:	November 2022

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Background

The City of Greater Dandenong 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 or managed by Council, with specific soft and single use plastics being prevented from use within events or applicable activities as an initial step towards reducing plastic use across the municipality.

Alongside supporting the Victorian Government's implementation of a state-wide ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags from November 2019, Council is committed to advocating and engaging with the Dandenong Market and its traders and the community in responding to the state-wide ban. Council will also continue to promote the reduction and elimination of single-use plastic bags and other soft and single use plastics use by the community.

High-level key priorities and objectives supporting the Plastics Policy outlined in the Council Plan 2017-21 include:

- A vibrant, connected and safe community;
- A healthy, liveable and sustainable city;
- A city planned for the future; And
- An open and effective Council;

The Sustainability Strategy 2016-30 sets out the City of Greater Dandenong's vision for a sustainable future and provides the strategic framework to implement it.

*Vision: By 2030 the City of Greater Dandenong is one of the most sustainable cities in Australia – City of Greater Dandenong's Sustainability Strategy 2016-30.*

The Sustainability Strategy's Waste & Resources Theme includes a commitment to reducing the impact of waste, especially with regards to single-use plastics.

### 3. Context

Single-use plastics, or disposable plastics, are typically used only once, before they are thrown away or recycled. These items include plastic bags, plastic straws, coffee stirrers, soda and water bottles, plastic cups, balloons and unnecessary soft plastic packaging such as that used for food. Reducing the use of single-use plastics by Council and the community is an objective that is aligned with the City of Greater Dandenong's expectations and environmental values, as well as the community consultation outcomes on Council's Sustainability Strategy 2016-2030.

According to research completed by the State Government's Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP), Australians on average use around 65 kilograms of plastic per person per year, a third of which is single-use plastics. Globally, single-use plastic accounts for nearly 50% of marine pollution (United Nations Environment Program 2018), with bags, straws, balloons and bottles being some of the most harmful pollutants threatening marine wildlife (CSIRO 2016).

Each year, more than 1 million seabirds and 100,000 marine animals die from ingesting plastic. Balloons can end up hundreds of kilometers from where they were released, causing great harm to the environment and wildlife, especially when digested, due to them resembling a source of food such as a jellyfish. Globally, plastic straws have been identified as the 8<sup>th</sup> most found ocean trash in cleanups by quantity (2019).

Further, a 2016 CSIRO study identified balloons, along with plastic bags and bottles, as among the top three most harmful pollutants on marine animals and birds. Within Victoria, plastic is the main source of litter in open spaces, including beaches, highways

# Greater Dandenong Policy

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and parks, with 96% of beach litter coming from our suburban streets through the storm water system (EPA 2016).

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. Aside from the large level of litter and waste that plastic generates, plastic does not bio-degrade, rather it breaks down into smaller pieces to become micro-plastic. Micro-plastic is also increasingly 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, governments throughout Australia and across the world have recognised the impacts that single-use plastics have on our environment and are acting. For example, the Victorian Government's Environment Protection Amendment Bill 2019 will see the banning of lightweight plastic shopping bags by all retailers come into effect from November 2019. The ban will apply to all lightweight plastic shopping bags which have a thickness below 36 microns, including degradable, biodegradable and compostable bags.

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to Council operations (including staff, contractors or other representatives) as well as those planning, organising, running, and/or approving festivals, events and applicable activities on any land or building owned and managed by Council.

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 managed by Council and in Council facilities and services.

The policy includes, but is not limited to all civic, commercial or community festivals, events, meetings, community forums, information sessions, workshops, training events, programs, organised / formal sport or recreation events and other applicable activities on any land or building owned and managed by Council.

## 5. Exemptions

Events and activities occurring on Council land, but not managed by Council staff, and not needing an event permit, hire agreement, lease or tenancy agreement are not included in the mandatory scope of this policy. However, they shall be encouraged and supported by Council to voluntarily comply.

# Greater Dandenong Policy

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Events booked prior to the date of this policy being adopted by Council will not be required to comply but shall be encouraged and supported to comply on a voluntary basis.

The policy exempts single-use and soft plastic items necessary to meet health and safety requirements, or where there is no other practical alternative product or distribution method available.

All exemptions require written approval. An application for an exemption must be made in writing to Greater Dandenong Council's internal Sustainability Advisory Group (SAG). This application for an exemption will be reviewed by the SAG at one of its quarterly meetings. Between SAG meetings a temporary exemption may be granted by the Chairperson of the SAG, but a formal exemption may only be granted at a SAG meeting.

For many people with disability, plastic straws are an essential accessibility tool that allows for drinks to be consumed safely and easily. Straws will be made available on request to persons with physical or medical requirements. No proof of disability is required.

The Dandenong Market and commercial operators on Council owned land are exempt from this policy. However, they shall be encouraged and supported by Council to voluntarily comply.

## 6. Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter – Compatibility Statement

*The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities has been considered in the preparation of this Policy but is not relevant to the content of the Policy.*

## 7. References

### 7.1. Legislation

- the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* provides the framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in the interest of the community both now and in the long-term.
- the *Environment Protection Act 1970* provides a legal framework to protect the environment in the State of Victoria. It applies to noise emissions and the air, water and land in Victoria, the territorial sea along the Victorian coast and to the discharge of waste to the Murray River from any premises in Victoria.

### 7.2. Councils

- Darebin City Council Single-Use Plastic Free Events Policy, version 1.0 February 2018
- Moreland City Council Plastic Wise Policy, April 2019
- Wyndham City Council Single Use Plastic Policy, 5 March 2019
- Indigo Shire Council Plastic Wise Policy, version 1b 31 July 2018
- Yarra City Council Proudly Plastic Free Program 2019
- Bayside City Council website: Reducing Plastic Waste

### 7.3. Other

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Reducing the impacts of plastics on the Victorian environment, 2017
- CSIRO, Sources, distribution and fate of marine debris, 2016
- UN Environment Program, Single-Use Plastics A roadmap for Sustainability, 2018
- Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Yarra and Bay Program: Litter, 2016

## 8. 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.

**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.

**Council Event** – Any event organised by Council Officers.

**Community Event** – 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 sites** – Land, road, or any other location owned or managed by Council.

**Council buildings** – Buildings or venues owned or managed by Council.

**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 use to carry drinking water or any other beverage designed or intended to be discarded after consumption.

**Single-use plastic bag** – A type of bag or pouch made from thin, flexible, plastic film that is used for containing or transporting goods, designed to be used only once or for a short period of time before being discarded.

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

Lightweight plastic shopping bags have a thickness below 36 microns, and include degradable, biodegradable and compostable bags.

**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 or managed sites, including those run by community sporting clubs.

**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).

## 9. Council Policy

### 9.1. Policy Vision

To eliminate the use of single use plastics across Council's corporate operations and at any festival, event or other activity held on any land or building owned or managed by Council to reduce the environmental impact of single use plastics within Greater Dandenong.

### 9.2. Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To reduce, eliminate and transition away from single-use plastic bags and other soft plastics across Council's corporate operations
- To reduce the environmental impact of single-use plastic pollution on the land, in waterways and the marine environment and particularly its detrimental impact on marine animals, birds, the food chain and human health.
- To prevent the distribution or use by organisations or individuals conducting an event or activity on any land or building owned or managed by Council to use single-use plastic bags, plastic straws, balloons and all unnecessary soft plastic packaging, where possible.

- To support the Victorian State Government's ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags and its Plastic Reduction Plan, which seeks to reduce pollution and the amount of plastic waste sent to landfill, encourage better recycling outcomes, as well as encourage and facilitate alternatives to single-use plastic products.
- To engage with and support the Dandenong Market and its traders, and other corporate operators on Council owned land in transitioning away from the use of single-use plastic bags and other single-use or soft plastics, such as plastic cutlery and packaging, and encourage alternatives like re-usable bags and compostable packaging.
- To engage and educate community groups, sports clubs and the broader community become single-use plastic free through an implementation plan that includes developing a Greater Dandenong plastic free program, mentoring and initiatives that support businesses and the community to reduce single use plastics.

### 9.3. Policy Details

To eliminate the use of single-use plastic and other soft plastics across Council's corporate operations, as part of its delivery of services, at events run by Council and events or activities held on sites owned or managed by Council, as well as in buildings owned or managed by Council, the following items must not be distributed, sold, provided or used:

- Single-use plastic bags;
- Plastic straws (See Exemption in Section 5);
- Balloons;
- Single-use plastic cups, plates, bowls, cutlery and take away food containers;
- Water bottled in plastic. Free access to drinking water must be provided. (See Exemption in Section 5);
- All unnecessary soft plastic packaging is to be avoided, where possible
- Event materials are to be reused where possible (including event signage and promotional banners and flags);
- Event organisers are to play a key role in educating and guiding their event staff and audience on single-use plastic free practices. This includes providing information via guidance documents for event organisers and stallholders and promoting reusable alternatives.

Sporting clubs, aquatic and leisure centres and community centres managed by contractors are permitted to provide, sell or distribute drinks in single-use plastic bottles until stakeholder engagement regarding integration of the Policy within relevant ground allocations, hire agreements, leases, licences and contracts has been re-evaluated or renewed. However, they must provide visible access to drinking water (e.g. water



# Greater Dandenong Policy

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bubblers and/or water jugs and reusable cups) and supply/sell reusable options (e.g. refillable drink bottles, reusable cups etc); and display promotional materials on reusable options.

Council officers will support organisations or individuals who need to comply with this policy including feedback outlining non-compliance when it occurs. However, if there is poor adherence to this policy, officers will recommend that these events not be approved and/or funded by Council in the future.

**Note:** The policy will be updated as required to align with future State Government legislative changes and any changes to definitions regarding single-use plastic.

## 9.4. Policy Commencement and Transition Period

This policy will commence once approved by Council.

This policy allows for a 6-month transition period, to enable Council Departments to apply the requirements of this policy to Council operations and events as outlined in the scope. This transition period allows for each department to respond to the waste hierarchy approach and allow time to engage and procure alternative options to single use products.

An initial twelve (12) month transition period from the approval date of this policy specifically applies to sporting clubs, and leisure contracted facilities, community groups and centres 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.

## 9.5. Implementation

The implementation of the Policy will be supported through a single use plastic implementation plan that incorporates a range of key measures which include:

- Support areas of Council that generate significant plastic waste to develop alternative practices and behaviour.
- Develop a whole of Council awareness and education program on Council's commitment to eliminate single-use and other soft plastic materials.
- Work closely with People & Procurement to encourage suppliers to provide alternatives to current plastic options.

- Work closely with Community Arts, Culture & Libraries to develop a clear set of event permit requirements and guidelines that will help deliver and promote plastic free Council or community events.
- Work closely with Community Development, Sport & Recreation and its partners (such as the YMCA) to incorporate the elimination and reduction of single-use and soft plastics, into the new contracts and agreements for the leisure centres in Keysborough, Noble Park and Dandenong.
- Work closely with Community Development, Sport & Recreation, and associated sports clubs and community groups located in Greater Dandenong, to eliminate and reduce the use of single-use and soft plastics, through education and incorporating this initiative into the terms and conditions of the licence agreements and grant funding agreements.
- Work closely with the Dandenong Market Board to support it and its traders implement its own approach to eliminating and reducing the impacts of single-use and soft plastics, as well as complying with the State Government's ban on lightweight plastic bags.
- Work closely with Communications & Customer Service to eliminate and reduce single-use plastics and soft plastics used for services, such as catering and community engagement.

## 9.6. 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.



## 9.6.1. Level 1 – Avoid

The following plastic products present a substantial risk to and have a significant impact on the environment. The use of these plastic products can be easily avoided or replaced with a preferred alternative therefore they must not be used, purchased, sold or distributed (excluding where exemptions apply. See Section 5: Exemptions):

- Single-use plastic bags;
- Plastic straws;
- Balloons;
- Single-use plastic plates, bowls, cups, cutlery, takeaway food containers and sachets;
- Single-use / disposable items and plastic packaging used for promotional items, and merchandise; and
- Plastic bottled water;

## 9.6.2. Level 2 – Reduce

The following plastic products remain a risk to and have an impact on the environment. Their use can be avoided or replaced with an alternative, therefore, where possible, they should not be used, purchased, sold or distributed:

- Single-use disposable cups and lids used for hot or cold drinks (e.g. takeaway coffee cups);
- Single serve drinks (in addition to water) that are packaged in plastic bottles (e.g. soft drink, energy drinks, fruit juice);
- All avoidable plastic packaging including cling wrap, wrappers, plastic bags or similar; and
- Single-use or limited use plastic items used in event infrastructure and promotions, including cable ties, course markings, decorations and giveaways.

# Greater Dandenong Policy

## 9.6.3. Level 3 – Reuse

Where the use of a plastic item cannot be eliminated, or its use reduced, products should be reused as much as possible.

## 9.6.4. Level 4 – Recycle

Where the use of a plastic item cannot be eliminated, its use cannot be reduced, or it cannot be reused, products must be recycled according to Council's Waste & Litter Strategy objectives. However, recycling is still considered a form of waste disposal. Avoiding, reducing and re-using are a preferred method to minimise waste.

## 9.7. Education

The benefits of eliminating and reducing single-use plastics should be communicated to the community through an ongoing education and awareness program, which is an action in the implementation plan. This should be run in conjunction with Council's Waste Education Team and in line with the key objectives outlined in Council's Waste and Litter Strategy.

## 9.8. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities should refer to the Implementation Framework Plan.

Party / Business Unit	Roles and Responsibilities	Timelines
Councillors	Leadership group of elected community representatives. Policy custodian and stewards for the endorsed Policy and its implementation.	Ongoing
CEO and Executive Management Team (EMT)	Leadership group comprising of the CEO and Directors  All Directors are Policy custodians. Ensures Council meets the endorsed objectives and standards within the Policy.  Promote and support implementation across the organization and the broader community.	Ongoing

# Greater Dandenong Policy

	Director Corporate Services and Director Community Services	
Sustainability Advisory Group	<p>Committee within Council that is responsible for the implementation of the Sustainability Strategy and the Annual Sustainability Report.</p> <p>Oversee the delivery of the policy and how it is reported on through the Annual Sustainability Report.</p> <p>Responsible for formally signing off on applications for exemptions to the policy.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Quarterly Meetings</p>
Sustainability 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 the Implementation Plan and programs.</p>	<p>2019/20</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Waste Services	Responsible for reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill and minimising the impact of plastic pollution.	Ongoing
Litter Action Task Force (Internal)	<p>Committee within Council responsible for the implementation of the Waste &amp; Litter Strategy.</p> <p>Support implementation through the provision of the Implementation Plan and programs.</p>	Ongoing
People Procurement Services	& Support implementation and provide guidance documents for Council's procurement and tender processes.	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2019/20</p>
Civic Facilities	Responsible for the hire and booking conditions of all council owned buildings available for hire.	<p>2019/20</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

# Greater Dandenong Policy

	Responsible for the ordering, supply and provision of items used in all civic buildings such as food, beverage and materials.	6-month transition period followed by progressive implementation in line with procurement and contracts
Festival & Events	Support implementation for festivals and events.	Ongoing  6-month transition period followed by progressive implementation.
Sport and Recreation	Responsible for the development and implementation of agreements between management agencies, sporting clubs and council.  Ensures all leisure centre contracts and agreements and community lease/ license agreements are in line with Council objectives and compliment broader community outcomes.	2019/20  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.	2019/20  Progressive implementation in line with update/renewal of grant conditions and contracts etc
Commercial Property	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.	2019/2020  Progressive implementation in line with update/renewal of permits, leases, licences and

		contracts.
All other Council units		Ongoing

## 10. Evaluation, Monitoring & Reporting

### 10.1. Evaluation

A formal evaluation and review of the Policy will be conducted two years after it has been formally adopted by Council and will help inform updates to the Waste and Litter Strategy.

### 10.2. Monitoring and Reporting

The implementation of the policy will be monitored and reported on by Council, to ensure compliance with the endorsed objectives and standards. This information will be reported on in Council's Annual Sustainability Report.

All Business Units to provide information to be reported on in regard to Council's performance against the Policy objectives and targets in the Annual Sustainability Report.

## 11. Related Documents

### 10.1 Plans, Strategies and Policies

- *Imagine 2030 Community Plan*
- *Council Plan 2017-21*
- *Community Wellbeing Plan 2017-21*
- *Sustainability Strategy 2016-30*
- *Procurement Policy 2015*
- *Waste and Litter Strategy 2015*
- *Leasing and Licensing of Commercial Property*
- *Leasing and Licensing of Community Facilities*

### 10.2 Programs

- *Festival and Events Program*