

Greater Dandenong City Council **PLASTIC USE POLICY**



April 2023

WHY HAS GREATER DANDENONG CITY COUNCIL IMPLEMENTED A PLASTIC USE POLICY?

In November 2019, the Victorian Government issued a state-wide ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags with a thickness below 36 microns¹. In response to this important step for the reduction of single use plastics (SUPs), Greater Dandenong City Council adopted the [Plastic Use Policy](#). The policy, which is now in effect, aims to eliminate the use of common single use plastics across Council's corporate operations and at any festival, event or other registered activity held on land and building's owned or managed by Council staff, contractors and representatives. This guide is to assist those required to comply with the Plastic Use Policy.

WHO DOES THE PLASTIC USE POLICY APPLY TO?

- Those planning, organising, running and/or approving festivals and events on Council owned land or in any Council owned buildings.
- Those planning, organising, running and/or approving activities on Council owned land or in any Council owned buildings. This includes kindergartens and early learning centres operating in Council owned facilities.
- Registered community organisations or service providers operating out of Council owned buildings or facilities.
- All registered sporting clubs and sporting associations using allocated Council owned land and facilities.
- All leisure centre operators of Council owned facilities.

THE POLICY DOES NOT APPLY TO:

- Those planning, organising, and/or running events and activities occurring on Council land that do not need an event permit, hire agreement, lease or tenancy agreement (e.g. a private gathering in a park or reserve).
- Dandenong Market operators and stallholders.
- Commercial operators leasing Council owned land (this includes private early learning centres).
- Those requiring the use of SUPs because of disability, physical or medical requirements and hygienic requirements.

THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT BAN ON SUPS

In February 2023, the Victorian Government implemented a state-wide ban on the sale and supply of single use straws, cutlery, plates, drink-stirrers, expanded polystyrene food and drink containers and cotton bud sticks. For the target groups of Greater Dandenong's Plastic Use Policy, this means you also need to discontinue use of cotton buds.

vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics



1. Microns refers to the thickness of the plastic. A micron is a unit of measurement. One micron = one thousandth of a millimetre.



FESTIVALS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Markets
- Ceremonies (including registered birthday parties)
- Exhibitions
- Functions
- Meetings
- Forums
- Information sessions
- Workshops
- Training events
- Programs
- Registered competitive sporting events.
- Other registered sport and recreation events
- Exercise classes
- Playgroups
- Festivals

WHAT ARE SINGLE USE PLASTICS?

SUPs are items made from plastic or polystyrene (which is a type of petrochemical plastic) that are used only once or a few times before they are disposed of.

WHAT SINGLE USE PLASTICS ARE INCLUDED IN THE PLASTIC USE POLICY?

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

The policy requires the following single use plastics not to be used, sold or distributed:



BAGS



STRAWS



BALLOONS



CUPS



PLATES AND BOWLS



CUTLERY



TAKEAWAY FOOD CONTAINERS



WATER BOTTLED IN PLASTIC

WHY ARE THESE PLASTICS INCLUDED IN THE PLASTIC USE POLICY?

The SUPs in this policy present a substantial risk to and have a significant impact on the environment. Plastic was deliberately created to be long-lasting and many kinds made to be disposable (hence the term single use plastic).



See the impacts these plastics have on the environment, wildlife and our health, below.

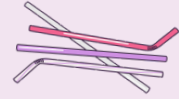
1. SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS



Even with the State Government ban on lightweight plastic bags in 2019, 'heavier' plastic bags are still commonly used and disposed of. When in the environment, they often look like food and cause animals to choke. Plastic bags in the ocean have been likened to jellyfish and smell like food. It can also fill the stomachs of marine wildlife and leave no room for real food. Each year more than 1 million seabirds and 100,000 marine animals die from ingesting plastic. Plastic bags are also a major cause of contamination in recycling bins when people bag their recyclable items. Contamination can lead to an entire load of recycling being sent to landfill.

 **TIME TO BREAK DOWN:
20 YEARS²**

2. PLASTIC STRAWS*



Around 10 million single use plastic straws are used each day by Australians. They are used for just 20 minutes on average and then thrown out. Plastic straws can't be recycled due to their small size, so all of them end up in landfill or out in the environment. They are lightweight so are easily blown through the air, creating litter.

 **TIME TO BREAK DOWN:
200 YEARS³**


3. BALLOONS



Helium filled balloons made from latex and foil are often released into the sky, either accidentally or purposefully. They can travel long distances before turning into litter. If they land in the ocean they look like food to animals and can be lethal when ingested.

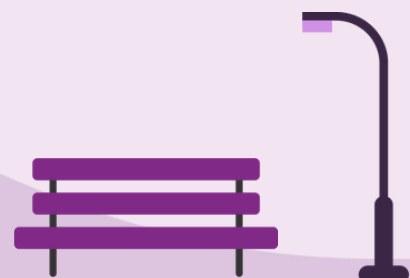
 **TIME TO BREAK DOWN:
UP TO 4 YEARS³**

Read more about the impacts of balloons on marine life from Zoos Victoria.

[Read more](#) 

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

2. WWF, 2021
3. Sustainability Victoria, 2022



4. SINGLE-USE PLASTIC CUPS



Both traditional plastic cups used for cold drinks such as bubble tea and polystyrene cups, release toxic chemicals into the environment when they start to break down. They often take hundreds of years to break down because the chemical bonds of the plastic cups make them highly durable.

 **TIME TO BREAK DOWN:
450 YEARS³**

5. SINGLE USE PLASTIC PLATES, BOWLS, CUTLERY AND TAKEAWAY FOOD CONTAINERS



Plastic food dishes, forks, knives and spoons are packaged together with takeaway containers for people to eat with and then dispose of later. When littered in the environment, these types of hard plastics break down into microplastics. These are extremely small pieces of plastic that are impossible to clean up. This plastic has been found in the fish and sea animals humans eat, and in humans themselves.

 **TIME TO BREAK DOWN:
450 – 500 YEARS³**

3. Sustainability Victoria, 2022

4. Westernport Water, 2019

5. Clean Up Australia, 2022

6. WATER BOTTLED IN PLASTIC



Plastic water bottles are one of the most common single use plastic items purchased in Australia. We throw out almost 375 million bottles into landfill each year, though many of these end up in our waterways and oceans⁴.

It takes 3 litres of water just to make one single use plastic bottle⁵. With Melbourne's tap water rated as one of the worlds cleanest to drink, our water tastes great and it's cheaper too.

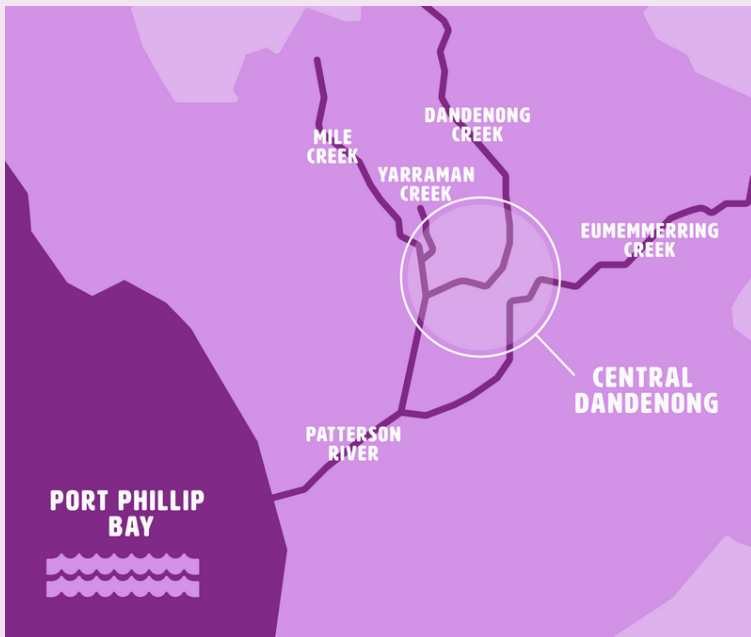
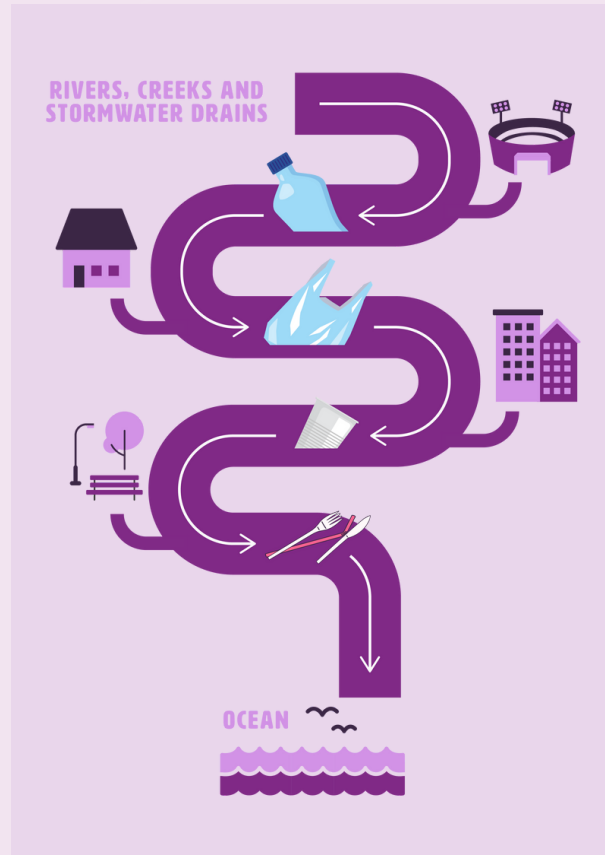
 **TIME TO BREAK DOWN:
450 – 1000 YEARS³**



COUNCIL ALSO ENCOURAGES THE AVOIDANCE OF ALL UNNECESSARY SOFT PLASTIC PACKAGING AND THE REUSE OF EVENT MATERIALS.

SINGLE USE PLASTICS IN GREATER DANDENONG

- As individuals, we send an average of 68 kilograms of plastic to landfill each year, with about one third of this being single use plastic⁶.
- Although Greater Dandenong is inland, we have an extensive drainage network connected by over 1,000km of stormwater pipes that all drain to the local waterways of Dandenong Creek and Mordialloc Creek, which empty into Port Phillip Bay. This means any waste that is littered can make its way out to the ocean.
- The Metropolitan Melbourne Litter Plan 2020–22 found that single use plastics were the fourth ranked problem litter types for metropolitan Melbourne.



- In one year almost 22 tonnes of litter was collected in litter traps located in Greater Dandenong's waterways and drains. A large portion of this litter was made up of single use plastics.
- Council spends over \$300,000 annually to pick up litter around Greater Dandenong.
- As a result, not only do single use plastics pose a threat to our natural environment but it also affects the amenity of our streets, parks and waterways and comes at a significant cost to Council to clean up.

6. Premier of Victoria, 2021



MORE INFORMATION

For targeted advice on alternatives to single use plastics for Sports Clubs and Facilities, Community Groups and Organisations, and Event Organisers and Stallholders please visit:


greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/plastics-policy

General information on reducing plastic use can be found at:

greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/sustainability

For tailored advice and further information, contact Greater Dandenong City Council's Sustainability Planning Unit on 8571 1000 or email sustainability@cgd.vic.gov.au



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