

Holding a plastic free event in Whitehorse

A guide for event organisers and vendors to avoid using single-use plastics at events, markets and festivals.



Introduction

Whitehorse City Council is committed to reducing waste generated at events, in particular single-use plastics. This guide supports event organisers and vendors to avoid single-use plastics and encourage the use of reusable alternatives.

Single-use plastics include items such as plates, bowls, cups, straws, cutlery, bags, bottled water, condiment sachets and containers, cling wrap and soft plastic food packaging.

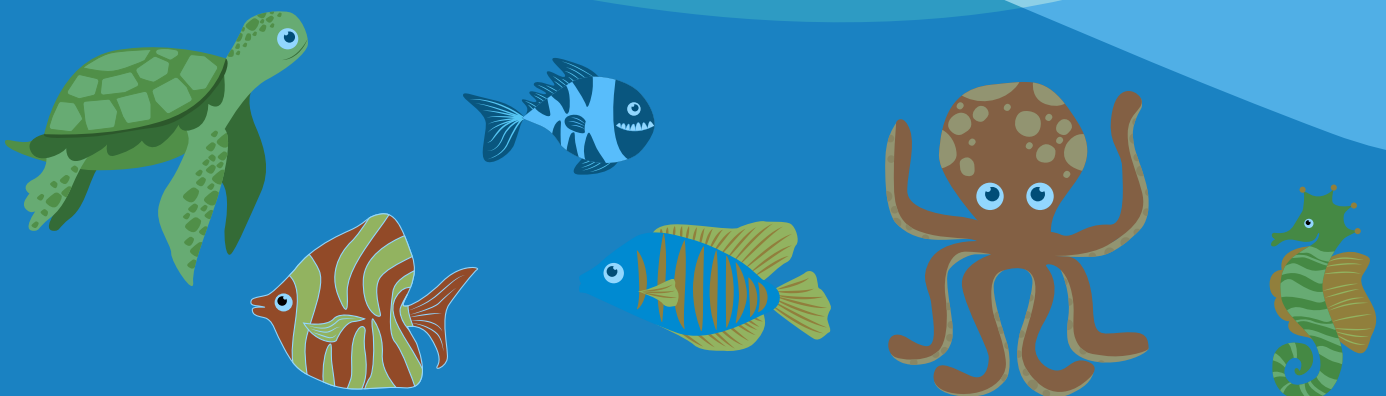
Single-use plastics are a major problem because they:

- are wasteful, unnecessary and used only for a short period of time
- only 13% of single-use plastic is recycled, which means 87% is sent to landfill or ends up as litter, and the materials and resources are lost (National Plastics Plan, 2021)
- many single-use plastic items are difficult and economically unviable to recycle due to their shape, size and plastic-type (DELWP, 2021)
- approximately 130,000 tonnes of plastic enters our waterways and leaks into the marine environment each year in Australia (National Plastics Plan, 2021)

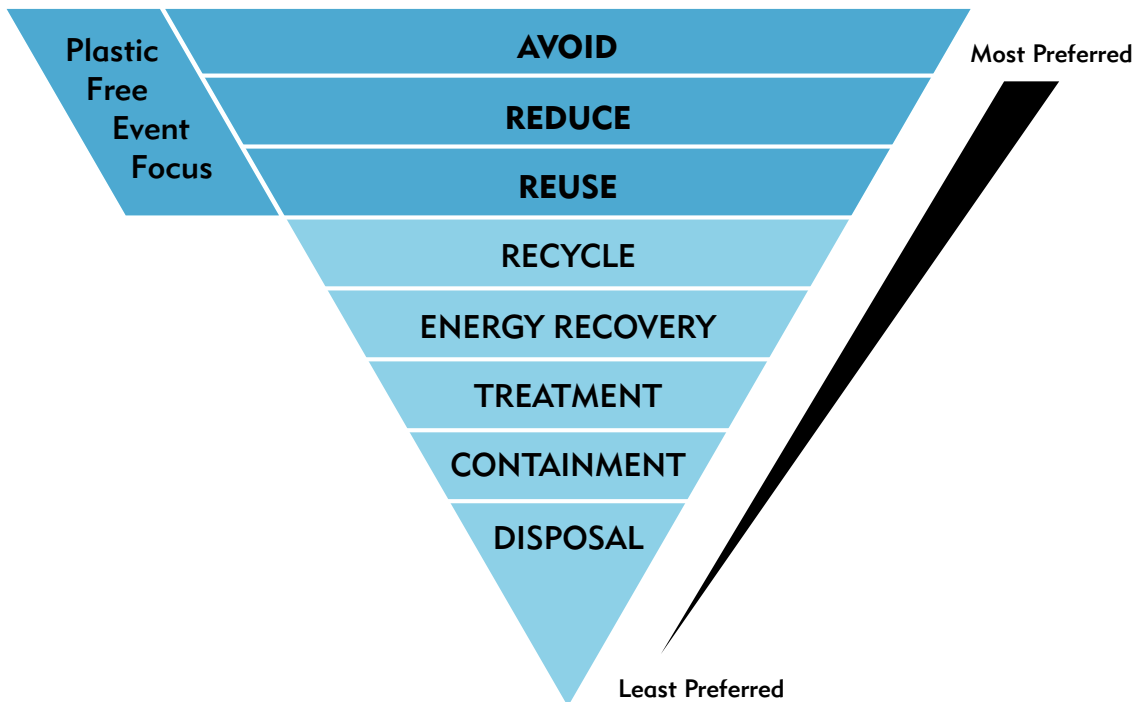
Single-use plastics can often be easily avoided or replaced with reusable products.

Promoting the recyclability of single-use items would help recover and conserve materials, but is not the best option, as the recycling process is energy and resource intensive.

As an event organiser you have the opportunity to create change and be part of the solution. This guide has been developed to help you stop the use or supply of single-use plastic items at events and festivals in Whitehorse.

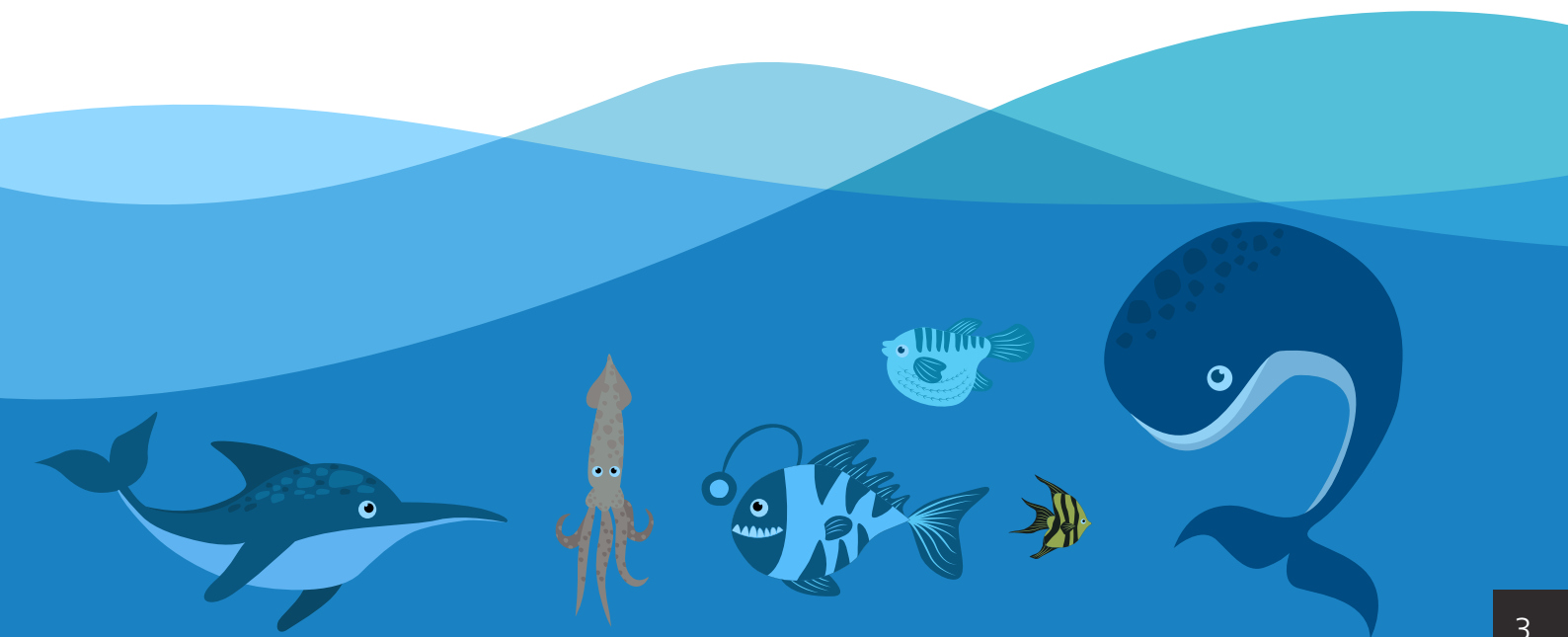


When planning your event, the avoidance of waste is the best and most preferred option.



By eliminating single-use plastics from events you can:

- reduce waste to landfill
- reduce the demand for these products
- reduce litter and its impact on wildlife, waterways and public amenity
- increase awareness about the impacts that single-use plastics have on our community and the environment



10 easy steps to host waste wise events

1. Advertise and promote the event as plastic-free to vendors, stallholders and event patrons, including promotion of why avoiding single-use plastics is important.
2. Comply with the [Victorian Government single-use plastic ban](#).
3. Partner up with a company that offers a reusable model that stallholders, vendors and participants can easily and readily use.
4. Encourage patrons to bring their own water bottles, coffee cups, containers, cutlery and plates etc.
5. Ensure all vendors supply only reusables or 100 per cent compostable foodware (eg. plates, cups, utensils, containers) that meets the compostable Australian Standards, and support this with a separate compostable waste stream. Please note that not all commercial composting facilities accept compostable packaging products.
6. Provide a water station or water refill points on site so patrons can refill bottles.
7. Provide easy to access bin stations, which include recycling, food organics, compostable packaging (where applicable) and garbage. Consider a separate cardboard collection cage for vendors.
8. Ensure bins have clear, simple signage including images. Where possible, provide bin monitors or bin 'fairies' at each station to educate patrons on how to separate waste correctly and monitor bins on the day.
9. Ban the use and distribution of single-use plastic bags, balloons, glitter or other plastic single-use decorations.
10. Arrange for your waste contractor to transport collected materials to appropriate facilities and provide you with waste data.

Reusables

As the event organiser, you can help facilitate and promote a reusable system:

- Partner up with a reusable cups and foodware company. There are companies that offer this service, including but not limited to [Green My Plate](#), [B-Alternative](#) or [Party Kit Network](#). Alternatively, the event can invest in their own reusables.
- To increase uptake and transition from single-use plastics, offer the reusable model to vendors free of charge. The reusable cost could be covered in many ways, including but not limited to the ticket or venue hire fee.
- Offer an onsite or kitchen space to manage and wash reusables and return to vendors.
- Provide a condiments station stocked with refillable sauces, dressings, salt and pepper etc.



Compostable packaging

The different types

Compostable packaging should be used as a last resort when reusable items are not accessible or practical.

Compostable packaging, particularly bioplastics, can still harm the environment, wildlife and marine life the same way conventional plastic items do, if they are littered (DELWP, 2021).

There are a variety of compostable options, such as home (AS 5810) and commercially-compostable bioplastics (AS 4736), as well as wooden and bamboo alternatives. These items can be obtained from several companies, including but not limited to:

- [Biopak](#)
- [Vegware](#)
- [Greenpack](#)
- [Compostable Alternatives](#)
- [Pakplast](#)
- [Eco Soul Life](#)



When buying compostable bioplastics, look for the symbols shown below, which means the product has been certified under Australian composting standards:



Watch out for any products labelled 'eco' or 'biodegradable', as these **are not** compostable.

Disposing of compostable packaging

At this stage, there are limited commercial compost facilities in Victoria that accept and process compostable packaging and bioplastics. This means, more often than not, it is ending up in landfill.

Compostable packaging can technically be processed by a commercial compost facility, which means it will biodegrade without leaving behind any toxic residue. These conditions include temperatures of 60 degrees, plenty of oxygen and good moisture levels. If those conditions are not met, the compostable packaging will not break down.

Get in touch with one of the following companies to see if they can provide food and compostable packaging waste solutions for events and festivals.

- [Closed Loop](#)
- [Total Waste Solutions](#)
- [B-alternative](#)

Council's Food and Garden Organics Service

If Council's food and garden organics service is available at your event location, such as some council facilities and households, the bin can be used to recycle food waste, but not compostable packaging.

For more information and to order a bin visit:
www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/food-recycling



Single-use plastic alternatives

Many of the following items align with the [Victorian Government single-use plastics ban](#). While this list does not specify every single-use plastic item, all single-use plastics should be avoided where possible.

The best option is reusable – see suggested items below or choose an item from the ‘next best option’ column if reusable is not possible or practicable.

Some reasons reusable may not be possible include:

- washing facility is not available or viable on site. Consider organisations that can provide this service for example B-Alternative
- single-use plastic items need to meet Food Safety or Occupational Health and Safety requirements or where there is no other practical alternative product or distribution method available and
- Victorian Government 2023 single-use plastics ban exemptions.

Victorian Government single-use plastics ban (February 2023)		
Banned item	Best option	Next best option
Plastic plates	BYO plates, bowls, containers	Serviettes, square of cardboard or other low impact alternative Paper or bamboo plates with no plastic lining
Plastic cutlery including knives, forks, spoons, chopsticks, sporks, splades, food picks and sporks	BYO cutlery Reusable cutlery	Wooden or bamboo cutlery*
Plastics straws	No straw BYO reusable straw Sell reusable straws	Paper or bamboo straw*
Plastic drink stirrers and sticks	Reusable teaspoons	Wooden stirrers*

Plastic bowls and cups (for hot liquid)	BYO reusable bowls and cups Stallholders provide reusable mugs with an appropriate wash-up station	Paper cups with wax instead of plastic lining Certified compostable bowls and cups*
Plastic cotton bud sticks	Reusable cotton buds	
Expanded polystyrene food and drink service containers including plates, cups, bowls, clam shells and any cover or lid	BYO takeaway packaging	Certified compostable food and drink service containers, bowls, cups*

Other common/problematic single-use plastics

Banned item	Best option	Next best option
Balloons, glitter and other plastic decorations	Bunting, flags, banners, streamers or bubbles Paper decorations (Avoid laminating signs or other communications)	
Plastic bags	Paper bags Paper or cardboard packaging alternatives Reusable bags	Compostable plastic bags*
Cling wrap	Reusable containers Reusable silicone food covers and lids	Compostable cling wrap*

Disposable coffee cups and lids	BYO reusable coffee cup Provide reusable cups at a cost, through initiatives including but not limited to Huskee Cup , Green Caffein , One Good Cup , Skip Zero or Cercle	Paper cups with wax instead of plastic lining or compostable cups*
Water bottles	Drinking water available on site e.g. taps, portable re-fill stations, water dispensers BYO bottles	Drinks served in aluminium cans or glass bottles (both recyclable) Compostable cups*
Bubble wrap	No internal packaging Brown paper packaging, mesh or corrugated cardboard (recyclable)	Corn starch peanuts*
Single-serve plastic condiments	Serve in reusable containers or bottles Apply condiment for customer	
Takeaway containers	BYO plate, container or vessel	Compostable takeaway containers*
Coffee pods	Different coffee machine and coffee beans	Coffee pod recycling program

*If these items are collected as a separate waste stream, they may be accepted by a commercial compost facility (if available). Refer to page 7 for more information.

For more information contact the Waste Reduction and Recycling Team at Whitehorse City Council by emailing wasteteam@whitehorse.vic.gov.au





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

CONTACTING COUNCIL

- Postal Address:** Whitehorse City Council
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading Delivery Centre 3131
- ABN:** 39 549 568 822
- Telephone:** 9262 6333 (including language support)
- NRS:** 133 677 then quote 9262 6333
(Service for deaf or hearing impaired people)
- Service Centre:** Whitehorse Civic Centre
379-399 Whitehorse Road,
Nunawading 3131
- Website:** www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/contact-us
- Email:** customer.service@whitehorse.vic.gov.au
- Social Media:** Connect with Whitehorse City Council
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