

Single-use Plastic Policy

Adopted by Council
25 August 2020



SUP? single
use
plastic

there's a better choice



MORNINGTON
PENINSULA
Shire

Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges and pays respect to the elders, families and ancestors of the Bunurong/BoonWurrung people, who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong/BoonWurrung peoples' living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.

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1. Introduction

The Mornington Peninsula Shire contains iconic natural assets, valued for scenic landscapes and beaches, sites of cultural and historical importance and geomorphological significance. The intrinsic benefits of our natural environments are one of the reasons people choose to live and visit the Peninsula. As a coastal community, the protection of our rivers, bays and oceans is integral to ensuring that our wildlife thrive and that we continue to support the health and wellbeing of our residents and visitors.

Plastics are strong, versatile, convenient, affordable and made to last. Yet most plastic items are used just once, which has led to one of our planet's greatest environmental challenges. When discarded in landfill or in the environment, plastic can take thousands of years to decompose, if at all.

Plastics in the environment break up into smaller and smaller pieces over time (micro-plastics). Microplastics can be found in birds, seals, whales, turtles, fish and shellfish, where it may enter the human food chain (UNEP 2016). The potential impact of plastic pollution is therefore long-term and can become increasingly difficult to manage over time.

The 2017-18 National Litter Index indicates that overall, cigarette butts, beverage containers and takeaway food packaging and beverage packaging

represent two-thirds (66%) of all the litter counted across the country (KAB 2018). When plastics are littered, the impact comprises not only the lost economic value in the material and its production, but also the costs of clean ups, losses for recreation, tourism and the liveability of our coastal areas.

Plastic pollution is rising. Globally, approximately 8 million tonnes of plastic waste will end up in our waterways and oceans every year. It is estimated that the surface of the ocean contains over 5 trillion plastic pieces, weighing over 250,000 tonnes – transforming some marine areas into 'plastic soup' (DEWLP 2017).

Global efforts to reduce or eliminate the consumption of single-use plastics have been gaining momentum. Many countries, states and cities around the world are banning and taxing single use items.

It is critical that the Mornington Peninsula also takes action to decrease our reliance on plastics and reduce the amount of litter, and specifically plastics, that ends up in our reserves, rivers, waterways, bay and oceans. Continued reliance on the community and Council to clean-up litter is no longer acceptable; measures that address litter at its source will be required to proactively and strategically tackle plastic pollution.



2. Objectives

This policy upholds The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council's (Council) commitment to reducing the consumption of products from non-renewable resources and protecting our natural environments from plastic pollution.

This policy outlines the principles and decision-making framework for Council, the community and businesses to phase out single-use plastics in all Council business, on Council owned and managed lands, and in Council buildings. This policy supports Council's ambitious target of zero waste to landfill by 2030.

This policy will:

- Reduce carbon emissions caused by producing, transporting, recycling and disposing single-use plastics;
- Reduce single-use plastic pollution in our beaches, reserves, parks, bays, waterways and oceans;
- Minimise the amount of valuable resources going to landfill;
- Enhance Mornington Peninsula Shire as a clean, green and healthy place to live and visit;
- Increase community pride and encourage leadership in environmental stewardship; and
- Create opportunities for new resource infrastructure and a circular economy

3. Council Framework

Following overwhelming support from the community, on Tuesday 23 July 2019, Council endorsed the following motion:

1. That Council commits to reducing the use of SUP [single-use plastics] within the Shire of Mornington Peninsula. This commitment will:
 - i) Commence the goal of eliminating SUP in the environments that Council controls; and
 - ii) Be a whole of Council commitment, incorporating Council policy, events, Council business (e.g. tenders, leases and contracts) and Council buildings.
2. Council will receive a report no later than 8 October 2019 that will inform Council of the feasible date for the elimination of SUP.
3. Council will engage with our community as soon as possible to inform them of our commitment to a SUP-free Shire and to enlist their support.

This policy references the following plans and strategies:

- Our Peninsula 2021 – the Mornington Peninsula Shire's Council Plan 2017-2021
- Our Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021
- Smoke Free Environment Policy
- Beyond Zero Waste Strategy 2030
- Climate Change Community Engagement Strategy
- Ensuring Our Future – Our Climate Emergency Response 2020 – 2030
- Events Policy 2019
- The General Purpose Local Laws
- Procurement Policy
- Environmentally Sustainable Design Policy (draft)



4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all Council business (staff, leases, and contracts) where single-use plastics may be used such as, but not limited to purchases, packaging, merchandise or transportation;
- all Council sponsored activities; and
- all individuals, groups, or organisations planning to use, hire and/or lease Council owned or managed sites (buildings and land) that require Council's approval, formal notification or a permit to conduct an activity. This includes, but not limited to, all events where a permit is required, information sessions, workshops, meetings, parties, festivals or club activities.

In areas outside of Council's direct control, Council will encourage and support single-use plastic free practices – refer to **section 7 Enabling Our Community**.

5. Definitions

Activity:

any planned event, workshop, information session or gathering of people where pre-approval from Council is required to either hold the event and/or hire an internal or external space

Commercially compostable:

an item that will biodegrade in a commercial composting facility in accordance to Australian Standards

Council:

The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

External:

any individual, group or organisation that is not employed or contracted by Council

Home compostable:

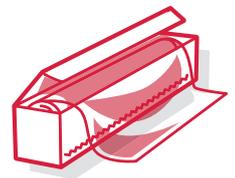
an item that will biodegrade in the home compost bin within a measured amount of time in accordance to Australian Standards

Leases:

an agreement to use all or part of a property or land owned by Council, for a specific amount of time in return of either a payment or no payment.

Single-use plastics:

items, products and packaging made from or composing of fossil fuel-based materials that are disposed of after one or limited use.



6. Policy

Grounded on the waste hierarchy principles, this policy prioritises single-use plastics substitutes that are locally sourced and made from renewable resources with a low carbon footprint. The hierarchy occurs in the following order:

1. Avoidance of single-use plastics products;
2. Reducing the need to use single-use plastic products;
3. Preferencing reusable and washable alternatives;
4. Replacing fossil fuel-based products with compostable certified, renewable and sustainability sourced goods when no other feasible options are readily available.

Prohibited single-use plastics items will be listed in the accompanying Single-use Plastics Guidelines. Council reserves the right to amend this list by adding or removing items at any given time.

Council will lead the community by:

- First eliminating single-use plastics within all Council business;
- Prioritising the avoidance of single-use plastics;
- Supporting staff, contractors, leases, events and the community directly impacted by this policy with the provision of single-use plastics resources and guidance;
- Continue community education on the environmental impacts of single-use plastics and encouragement for the wider community and businesses to avoid waste and phase out single-use plastics;
- Recognising 'single-use plastic free' businesses, communities or events;

- Enabling community ambassadors; and
- Supporting or advocating for State and Federal Government legislation to ban single-use plastics and support sustainable procurement and supply chains.

External parties directly impacted by this policy will:

- To the best of their ability, strive to meet best practice as stipulated in the Single-use Plastics Guidelines;
- Work with Council to develop and implement Single-use Plastics Avoidance Plans;
- Seek Council's support when required; and
- Apply for grants/funding as per Council's Community Grant guidelines.

6.1 Council Business

The following provisions apply for all Council facilities, buildings, contracts and operations:

- Single-use plastic items as identified in the Single-use Plastics Guidelines, are not to be procured, used, sold or distributed;
- Council run buildings and operations are only to use reusable alternatives where possible;
- If a washing facility is not available on site, AS 5810-2010 certified home compostable products may be used to substitute reusable cutlery and crockery;
- A customised list of additional single-use plastics items, in addition to items listed in the Guidelines, may be specified for individual Council units/teams



6.2 Externally managed activities

The following provisions apply for all external activities, inclusive but not exclusive to Council sponsored activities or activities that require prior Council consent:

- Single-use plastic items as identified in the Single-use Plastics Guidelines, are not to be used, sold or distributed;
- Conditions for single-use plastic replacements are detailed in the Single-use Plastics Guidelines;
- Prior-written approval is required for use of any single-use plastic alternatives not listed in the Single-use Plastics Guidelines;
- Activity site/s must be litter free and returned to its pre-activity conditions;
- Activity organiser/s must inform and educate their staff and patrons on single-use plastic practices such as considering whether single-use plastics are needed and acceptance of bring your own cups/take away containers/cutlery etc.; and
- For activities with a reoccurring agreement with Council, for example sporting clubs and building leases, a Single-use Plastics Avoidance Plan will be developed and annually reviewed.

6.3 Exemptions

Single-use plastics required to meet health, safety and accessibility requirements, or where no practical alternative is available, are exempted from this policy.

7. Enabling our community

Council will support and assist individuals, community groups, businesses, and event organisers to voluntarily comply with this policy by:

- Speaking at events;
- Providing technical and product advice;
- Distributing Council educational materials;
- Encouraging the community to participate in plastic-free programs or initiatives;
- Recognising single-use plastic free champions; and
- Encouraging applications to Council's Community Grants

8. Transition periods

This policy will take effect upon adoption; all parties must commence phasing out single-use plastics.

Within twelve (12) months from date of adoption, all stakeholders directly impacted by this policy with reoccurring agreements with Council must have developed and be actively working to implementing their single-use plastics avoidance plan. The single-use avoidance plan will be reviewed annually with a key focus on areas of improvement and opportunities to phase out additional single-use plastic items.



9. Ownership

The responsibility of the implementation of this policy will be shared across Council.

The Infrastructure Services Unit is the principle owner of this policy.

10. Review

The policy will initially be reviewed 12 months from date of adoption, with subsequent reviews every third year.

11. References

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) 2017. Reducing the impacts of plastics on the Victorian environment.

Keep Victoria Beautiful (KVB) 2018. National report 2017 – 2018 national litter index.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) 2016. UNEP Frontiers 2016 Report: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern.

