

## Eliminating single-use plastics

Single-use plastic is used on average for less than 12 minutes and then discarded, accounting for 50% of global pollution. This has devastating long term impact on our waterways and marine environment.

Merri-bek City Council has committed to reducing single-use plastic at our events and festivals, as part of our **Plastic Wise Policy**, adopted in April 2019.

## What items are not permitted at our events and festivals?

- Plastic bags
- Single-use plastic bottled water and bottled soft drinks
- Single-use plastic cups, plates, bowls, cutlery, straws and stirring sticks
  - Made from standard or compostable plastic
- Plastic takeaway containers
- Paper cups
  - Most paper cups are lined with plastic or compostable plastic
  - Noting an exemption can be provided if needed (see below)
- Balloons

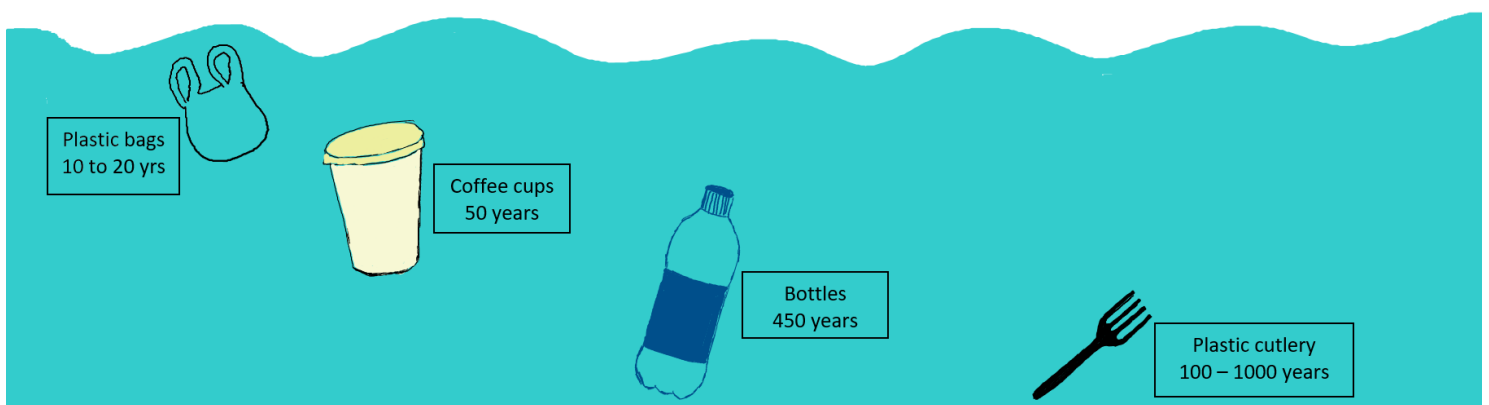
## Selling coffee or hot beverages?

- You will need an exemption letter from the Festivals Team. There are currently very few plastic-free single-use alternatives for hot beverages.

## What alternatives can I use?

- See overleaf for a list of commonly used alternatives to single-use plastic.

## How long does plastic remain in the ocean?



## What can I use instead of single-use plastic?

Product	Best option	Next best option	Tips for success
<b>Bottled water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinking water available on site (e.g., taps, bench top water dispensers, portable water stations)</li> <li>• Customers BYO reusable bottles</li> </ul>	Drinks in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aluminium cans (recyclable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct people to taps and/or hydration stations</li> <li>• Sell water in aluminium cans</li> </ul>
<b>Drinks in plastic bottles (e.g.: soft drinks)</b>	Drinks in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aluminium cans (recyclable)</li> </ul>		
<b>Plastic cups and coffee cups (including paper, compostable and biodegradable)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers BYO reusable cups</li> <li>• Provide reusable cups with a refundable deposit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cold drinks – use paper cups. Very few single-use plastic-free alternative exist. A <u>policy exemption</u> can be granted for cups if no 'best option' solution can be found.</li> <li>• Hot drinks – Use paper cups. very few single-use alternatives currently exist. A <u>policy exemption</u> can be granted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only provide lids when requested</li> </ul>
<b>Plates and bowls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers BYO plate/bowl/container</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serviette, square of cardboard, cabbage leaf or similar</li> <li>• Paper bowls/plates (recyclable - when scraped clean)</li> <li>• Bamboo or Areca palm plates (commercially compostable*)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If using disposables, avoid products with plastic lining</li> </ul>
<b>Cutlery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider serving foods that doesn't need cutlery</li> <li>• Customers BYO cutlery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bamboo cutlery (commercially compostable*)</li> <li>• Wooden cutlery (commercially compostable*)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask customers if they need cutlery rather than providing automatically</li> </ul>
<b>Stirring sticks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide several teaspoons which can be washed and reused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wooden stirring sticks (commercially compostable*)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic stirring sticks were banned in Victoria in Feb 2023.</li> <li>• Provide metal teaspoons or wooden sticks</li> </ul>
<b>Straws</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No straw</li> <li>• Customers BYO reusable straws</li> <li>• Sell reusable straws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper straw (commercially compostable*)</li> <li>• Bamboo straw (commercially compostable*)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic straws were banned in Victoria in Feb 2023, aside from for medical reasons</li> <li>• Only provide paper straws if requested by a customer</li> <li>• Quality paper straws last longer and the dye doesn't run</li> </ul>
<b>Plastic bags</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers BYO bags</li> <li>• Sell reusable bags (for the event or as a stallholder)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% recycled paper bags</li> <li>• FSC certified paper bags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider adding a small charge to cover any cost impact, if customers choose to take a paper bag</li> <li>• There is a State Government ban on thin single-use shopping bags</li> </ul>
<b>Single serve condiments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide condiments in large refillable containers (e.g., large tomato and soy sauce bottles)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure any large serving containers such as bottles or pump packs, are cleaned and sanitised before refilling</li> </ul>
<b>Balloons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace with paper lanterns, bunting, flags, banners or colourful streamers</li> <li>• Blow bubbles</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For stall decoration avoid the use of balloons</li> <li>• For promotional materials at events avoid balloons, promote re-use items</li> </ul>
<b>Bubble wrap</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace with corrugated cardboard or brown packing paper mesh (e.g., GreenWrap etc)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use suggested alternatives (or similar) for vendor transport of goods</li> <li>• Ask customers if they need the product wrapped, rather than providing automatically</li> </ul>

\* A commercial composting facility is required to process these products. The composting facility used by Merri-bek City Council does not accept these items. They need to be disposed of in general waste and cannot be recycled.