

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
- Plastic and polystyrene takeaway containers and polystyrene cups
- Balloons

Selling coffee or hot beverages?

- You will need an exemption letter from the Festivals Team. There is currently no plastic-free single-use alternative for hot beverages.

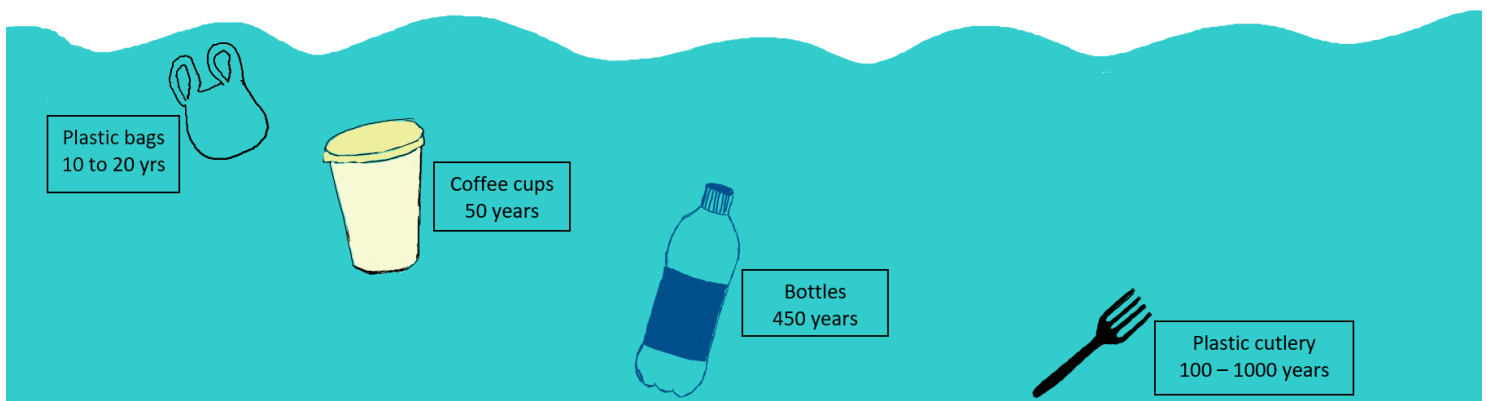
What about items to maintain good COVID-19 hygiene?

- Items like disposable gloves and disposable masks may be used to protect stallholders and patrons. We strongly encourage the use of reusable masks
- If accepting reusable coffee cups and containers follow COVID safe guidelines, and try using a contactless pour for hot drinks, see below for more detail
 - Boomerang Alliance's [Café Owner's guide to reusable foodware during Covid-19](#)
 - Boomerang Alliance's [The laws on accepting BYO Reusables](#)

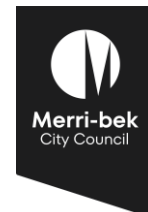
What alternatives can I use?

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

How long does plastic remain in the ocean?



PLASTIC WISE MERRI-BEK: EVENTS & FESTIVALS



What can I use instead of single-use plastic?

Product	Best option	Next best option	Tips for success
Drinks in plastic bottles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drinking water available on site (e.g. taps, bench top water dispensers, portable water stations) Customers BYO reusable bottles 	<p>Drinks in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aluminium cans (recyclable) Cardboard carton (recyclable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct people to taps and/or hydration stations Water can be purchased in single serve cardboard cartons (like milk cartons) or in cans. Consider cooperating with other stallholders for a better wholesale price Sell drinks in aluminium cans or cardboard cartons
Plastic cups and coffee cups (including paper, compostable and biodegradable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers BYO reusable cups Provide reusable cups with a refundable deposit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cold drinks - Paper cups (no single-use alternative currently exists). Hot drinks – no single-use alternative currently exists. A policy exemption can be granted for coffee cups if no 'best option' solution can be found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only provide lids when requested If disposable cups cannot be avoided, replacing plastic cups with paper cups reduces the amount of plastic in the environment.
Polystyrene cups and takeaway packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers BYO reusable cups or takeaway containers Provide reusable cups with a refundable deposit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For hot drinks use single-use coffee cups as per the details above, noting a policy exemption will be needed. Provide non-waxed cardboard takeaway containers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No polystyrene cups or takeaway packaging If these cannot be avoided, paper cups/containers reduce the amount of plastic in the environment.
Plates and bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers BYO plate/bowl/container 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serviette, square of cardboard, cabbage leaf or other low impact option Paper bowls/plates or cardboard (recyclable - when scraped clean) Bamboo or Areca palm plates (compostable*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If using disposables avoid products with plastic lining
Cutlery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider serving foods that don't need cutlery Customers BYO cutlery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bamboo cutlery (compostable*) Wooden cutlery (compostable*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask customers if they need cutlery rather than providing automatically
Stirring sticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide several teaspoons which can be washed and reused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wooden stirring sticks (compostable*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide metal teaspoons or wooden sticks
Straws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No straw Customers BYO reusable straws Sell reusable straws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper straw (compostable*) Bamboo straw (compostable*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only provide if requested by a customer Quality paper straws last longer and the dye doesn't run
Plastic bags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers BYO bags Sell reusable bags (for the event or as a stallholder) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% recycled paper bags FSC certified paper bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider adding a small charge to cover any cost increase if customers choose to take a paper bag There is a State Government ban on thin single-use shopping bags
Single serve condiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide condiments in large refillable containers (e.g., large tomato and soy sauce bottles) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that large serving containers such as bottles or pump packs are cleaned and sanitised before refilling
Balloons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace with paper lanterns, bunting, flags, banners or colourful streamers Blow bubbles 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For stall decoration avoid the use of balloons For promotional materials at events avoid balloons and promote re-use items
Bubble wrap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace with corrugated cardboard or brown packing paper mesh (e.g., GreenWrap) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use suggested alternatives (or similar) for vendor transport of goods Ask customers if they need the product packaged rather than providing automatically

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