

Ban on single use plastics

Australian's and New Zealander's used over 6 million tonnes of plastics in 2018-2019.

Nearly two million tonnes of our annual plastic consumption is single-use plastic and every year approximately 200,000 tonnes of plastic leaks into the marine environment.

Single use plastics harm the environment. They become micro plastics, which harm wildlife and contaminate food.

There are actions we can all take to reduce the effects of plastics on our environment.

Ban on Single Use Plastics

In 2020 the Australian Government agreed a National Plastics Plan that outlines the actions and key milestones to reduce Australia's plastics problem. New Zealand also developed a proposal in 2020 to phase out single use plastics.

The goals outlined in the plan are to:

- reduce plastic waste and increase recycling rates
- find alternatives to the plastics we don't need
- reduce the amount of plastics impacting our environment.

All State governments are now in the process of introducing legislation aimed at banning single use plastics.

The ban will not affect medical or scientific equipment, emergency management services, or people who require specific single-use plastic products due to disability or for health and safety.

What we mean by single-use plastics

Plastics items that are intended to be used only once for a short period of time (i.e. a week) before they are thrown away. This includes those that can be recycled (e.g. petroleum-based plastics, food packaging and containers, disposable items and materials used for temporary branding and marketing use), unless there is a legal and/or health and safety issue where single-use plastics are required (e.g. food gloves, food preservation, etc.).

What we consider not to be single-use plastic includes packaging and products that are designed to be used over a number of years and that can be repaired or dismantled and recycled.

How to stop using single use plastic

To reduce the use of single use plastics, Programmed recommends the following options.

1. Eliminate – Avoid through behaviour change e.g. water fountains instead of bottled water, reusable straws, cutlery, plates, Can we do without the product/activity?

2. Reusable alternative – Use reusable alternative item enabled by a system e.g. Keep Cup, etc. This may mean swapping plastics for dispensers, refillable cups and bottles and sourcing reusable packaging.

3. Sustainable alternative from renewable source – Use more sustainable materials from renewable source with better recycling outlets or biodegradability e.g. FSC paper, cardboard, cotton material etc.

4. Recyclable alternative – Other materials that have a high recycling rate that is not plastic e.g. glass, steel, and tin.

5. Recyclable plastic – Where single-use plastic is necessary due to regulation (e.g. food packaging), the aim is to source appropriate recycled plastic that will be fully recyclable and compatible with kerbside collection.

The ban: which single-use plastics are included?

Plastic straws, cutlery, plates, drink stirrers, expanded polystyrene food container, cotton bud sticks.



What you can use instead.

Reusable straws, reusable picnic cutlery, reusable plate, reusable spoon, reusable food container and cotton bud sticks.

Report all incidents and injuries