



PLASTIC FREE EVENT GUIDELINES

September 2019



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PURPOSE

The Council Plastic-Free¹ Event Guidelines have been produced to encourage waste reduction and maximise resource recovery and recycling opportunities at public place events held in the Central Coast Council (CCC) Local Government Area (LGA) as well as preserving public health and amenity of the surrounding environment. To encourage and educate event organisers and stallholders on running plastic free events held in the CCC LGA and to deliver and approve events that provide a balanced approach to economic activity, environmental responsibility and community development.

This document was developed to provide a framework for best practice plastic free event strategies to support events held by CCC and the community on and in CCC public managed land or buildings and fulfil community expectations. These guidelines also apply to any events funded through CCC grant and sponsorship programs.

With global, national and community attention now focused on single-use plastics and their consequences, this guide enables councils to take a leadership role and respond to community expectations by providing some practical solutions to single use plastics in the away-from-home situation. It is practical and easily adopted for events.

¹ *Plastic-free refers to the provision of non-plastic or alternative items by vendors and event organisers to the public at events. It includes the elimination of single-use, non-compostable food ware (coffee cups/lids, straws containers, bags, utensils and water bottles etc.) and the use of other problematic litter items such as helium balloons.

THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTICS AT EVENTS

PLASTIC POLLUTION GENERATED FROM PUBLIC EVENTS can be a major cause of environmental degradation, species decline and potential human health impacts.

PLASTIC LITTER IS AN EYESORE and contaminates our open and public places, negating the positive experience of these events.

SINGLE-USE, DISPOSABLE PLASTICS are a waste of resources and do not align with the values of sustainable events.

PLASTICS DERIVED FROM NON-RENEWABLE SOURCES such as fossil fuels contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, and event organisers have a responsibility to protect our environment.

PLASTICS PERSIST IN LANDFILL AND THE ENVIRONMENT and pose a problem for future generations, and event organisers have a responsibility to reduce the amount of waste generated.

PLASTIC FREE EVENT PRINCIPLES

GUIDELINES IN PRACTICE

AS A FIRST STEP, focus on eliminating the six single-use plastic items that are most often littered and found in the waste stream. These are water bottles, coffee cups and lids, straws, food ware (cups, plates, cutlery etc.), takeaway containers, and plastic bags.

DO NOT ALLOW the release of helium-filled balloons. A practical way to avoid them would be to prohibit their use and recommend alternative decorative items or commemorative activities.

ALL FOOD AND DRINK VENDORS should be required to provide only reusable or 100% compostable food ware (cutlery, plates, containers, cups etc) to the public.

INCLUDE SPECIFIC requirements in any contracts or arrangements with vendors.

Vendors should be informed of policies and why they have been adopted. This should also apply to franchise vendors. Compostable food ware should meet either the AS 4736 (commercial compost standard) or the AS 5810 (home compost standard). These are Australian Standards recommended by the Australian

Packaging Covenant (APCO). Products are readily available from suppliers.

PROVIDE ADEQUATE, clearly signed water bubblers or portable water stations and encourage the use of refillable water bottles. These can avoid plastic water bottles being used. Consider accessibility by children and those with mobility aids.

CONSIDER USING refillable drinkware, where possible. A refillable system for alcohol and soft drinks involves the public purchasing (or providing a deposit) and keeping a cup for the event. No drinks can be served without a refillable cup. These can be replaced each time if desired. Refillable containers could be branded and used repeatedly at council events.

WHERE REFILLABLES are not provided, events should provide drinks in either aluminium cans, glass bottles or certified compostable containers (subject to local regulations for container use at events).

PROMOTE THE EVENT as plastic-free. Educate staff, volunteers, vendors and suppliers about the plastic-free agenda.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS provided by event organisers, vendors, performers etc. should be reusable, recyclable or compostable for consistency.

A COLLECTION SERVICE for beverage containers should be provided if a container refund scheme is available. We suggest Council arrange for a local not-for-profit group to receive the refund.

ARRANGE FOR WASTE COLLECTORS to transport waste to appropriate facilities. Note that in some regions, where a commercial composter is not available, it will not be possible to compost. It is still advisable to follow a plastic free practice as this demonstrates a commitment to reducing plastic

pollution in the environment if the event generates litter. This also prepares stallholders and the public for when established in future.

EVENT ORGANISERS should ensure their office and back of house practices meet the above requirements and avoid the use of single-use plastics to the best of their ability. This should include any on-site facilities (ie. toilets) or crowd controls (ie. plastic film to cover fencing).

WE RECOMMEND THE ENGAGEMENT of an on-site Waste Manager, particularly for larger events or where litter and waste management may be challenging.

MATERIAL COLLECTION STATIONS should focus on a three-bin system for compost, recycling and waste, subject to composting services being available.

CLEAR SIGNAGE IS ESSENTIAL, pictures are most useful. To ensure correct use it is advisable to place volunteers at bin stations to show the correct usage and ensure effective and timely collection of full bins.

DATA COLLECTION IS ESSENTIAL to monitor performance and improve services. It is recommended that data is kept on quantities of materials sent for recycling, composting and waste. Your waste collectors should be able to provide this data. Monitoring compliance by vendors is important too. Surveys of public understanding will improve collection services, signage and public education programs.

QUICK GUIDE

SEVEN STEPS TO A PLASTIC-FREE EVENT:

1. Advertise and promote the event as plastic-free and BYO water bottles.
2. Require all vendors to supply only reusable or 100% compostable foodware (Australian standard or equivalent) to their customers at the event (plates, cups, utensils, containers etc.). Do not allow helium balloons to be used or released.
3. Provide a water station or water refill points on site for refillable bottles. Do not allow plastic drink bottles to be used or sold. Only allow aluminium cans or glass bottles to be sold.
4. Provide recycling, composting (where applicable) and waste stations on site for all attendees and stall holders.
5. Good and clear signage is essential. Ideally provide bin monitors to explain how the system works.
6. Arrange for your waste services to transport collected materials to appropriate facilities and provide waste data.
7. Review data and management arrangements on the plastic free outcomes and set new improved requirements for future events.

Note: BioCups and Plant Based Cups are not able to be recycled within our waste facilities. Paper based products are a preferred option.

GUIDE TO ELIMINATING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC FOR FOOD VENDORS

This guide is to assist event vendors selling food and drink items looking to transition away from single-use plastic. Alternatives are given to common single-use plastic items; water bottles, foodware (cutlery, cups, plates etc.), straws, coffee cups/lids, takeaway containers and plastic bags. We also encourage you to look at any other plastic you're using, for e.g. consider offering reusable bottles for sauce rather than individual sachets.

It is always better to choose **REUSABLE** alternatives wherever possible. Of course this is not always feasible, so we recommend using 100% certified compostable products (certified to Australian Standards) for takeaway where needed.

When sourcing products, be wary of those labelled only as 'biodegradable' or 'degradable'. This does **NOT** mean the same thing as compostable, and may be a plastic product.

Biodegradable products are not accepted for recycling in the yellow lid recycle bin or for composting in the green lid garden bin on the Central Coast. They need to be disposed of in the red lid general waste bin where they will be sent to landfill.

Ensure the product you're purchasing is 100% compostable. Where possible, try to choose natural products such as paper, bagasse, cardboard, wood, palm or bamboo, as these options compost more readily than bioplastics.

Water Bottles

- **Reusable Options**
Provide a water station for people to re-fill reusable bottle.
- **Disposable Options**
Provide a water station with bubbler options for people who do not bring a reusable bottle.

Coffee Cups and Lids

- **Reusable Options**
Accept customers with BYO cups and consider offering a discount for this.
- **Disposable Options**
Look for paper cups with 100% compostable lining (check lining is not traditional plastic or wax). Similarly, lids should be made from compostable material such as bagasse (preferred) or PLA/CPLA. Ensure lid is not PS (polystyrene) - these lids will have 'PS' and the number '6' on them - avoid! Lids are not accepted for recycling in the yellow lid recycle bin or for composting in the green lid garden bin on the Central Coast. They need to be disposed of in the red lid general waste bin where they will be sent to landfill.

Straws

- Remove all plastic straw options from events. If straw is requested, provide paper or wheat straws alternatives. Put up signage saying that you are reducing straws to. Note that disposable straws vary in quality - if you find one brand unsuitable, it is worth trying another. Avoid oxo-degradable/ biodegradable straws, these are plastic.

Foodware (plates, cups and cutlery)

- **Reusable Options**

If possible, use washable reusable items such as stainless steel cutlery and ceramic plates. The market/event may provide a wash up station.

- **Disposable Options**

Preference wooden/ paper/ cane or other 100% compostable items that meet home compost standard. Products made from bagasse are a good option as they are strong and leak-proof. For cold cups, paper is preferred. If lined ensure, all lining is 100% compostable. For cutlery, bamboo/ wood is the best option. Be wary of the label 'biodegradable'; ensure they are also labelled as compostable. Try to source sustainable products if possible. Cardboard takeaway packaging can be recycled (if clean from food scraps – oil is accepted) they need to be disposed of in the yellow lid recycle bin.

Takeaway Containers

- **Reusable Options**

Have a collection of containers and allow customers to borrow and bring back (for markets).

- **Disposable Options**

Re-think how much packaging you need to use - can you use a paper bag or napkin instead? Provide wooden/paper/cane or other 100% compostable containers that meet home compost standard. Be wary of the label 'biodegradable', ensure they are also labelled as compostable. Try to source sustainable products if possible.

Plastic bags

- **Reusable Options**

Don't provide plastic bags; instead sell reusable cloth bags (these can be branded).

- **Disposable Options**

Ask if customers really need a bag, many will have their own bag they can use. If a takeaway option is needed, provide sustainably sourced paper bags (can be branded) or recycled cardboard box.

MANDATORY CONDITIONS

To be acknowledged by the event organiser and stallholder:

Waste and Environment

1. CCC encourages all stallholders to minimise the environmental impact of their stalls and to implement strategies to improve the environment. Please use recyclable materials where at all possible.
2. Any product sold or distributed must be reusable, comprised of paper based or recyclable material.
3. Plastic bags, balloons and single use plastic straws and bottles are prohibited at all Council events.
4. Any food, liquid waste or rubbish of any description must be removed from the site by the Stallholder and leave the area clean and tidy at the conclusion of trading.
5. Stall infrastructure is not permitted to be attached to trees or other native flora/fauna.
6. Stall holders must not use Public Bins to dispose of commercial rubbish.
7. A phase out -period from 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2020 will take place in the use of single-use plastics at all Council run and sponsored events.
8. Council will ban single-use plastics at all Council run events, or events sponsored by Council from the 1 April 2020.
9. Events held after this date will be required to adhere to a Plastic Free Events Guide as a condition of being approved.
10. Any stall holder and/or that is found to be non-compliant, will have the opportunity to be inspected and make adjustments that are deemed to be compliant.
11. If stall holder and / or event do not comply, CCC will request a complete shutdown of the stall / event.
12. No compensation for loss of business, stock purchased or any other financial liability suffered by the stallholder will be made by CCC in this instance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We would like to thank and acknowledge The Boomerang Alliance. The Plastic Free Places program works in communities to directly reduce single-use plastic items, and to empower the community to make lasting changes towards a circular economy. The program is a partnership between Boomerang Alliance and the Australian Packaging Covenant (APCO). Resources to accompany these guidelines can be found on the Plastic Free Places website.