

## 75. SINGLE-USE PLASTIC FREE POLICY

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### Introduction

Douglas Shire Council ("Council") is committed to the elimination of single-use plastic at Council events, Council endorsed or funded events and on Council controlled sites.

This Policy outlines Council's commitment to eliminating single-use plastic across its operations and aligns with Council's adopted Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan. Council supports the Queensland Government's single-use plastic items bans and will ban additional single-use plastic items in Douglas Shire for which there are easily accessible, commercially viable alternatives available.

### Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Council's commitment to:

- Display strong environmental leadership by eliminating single-use plastic and balloons from Council controlled sites, at Council events, at Council funded or endorsed events and in the course of Council operations;
- Support the Queensland Government's Ban on single-use plastic items.
- Ban other single-use plastic items;
- Support the Plastic Free Cairns and Douglas Program;
- Educate our community on the ability to use and accept reusable items in the course of their business and activities;
- Support circular economy initiatives; and
- Discourage our communities from using single-use plastic and balloons.

This policy builds on four (4) of the Environmental Sustainable Principles outlined in Council's Corporate Sustainability General Policy, which are: 1. Preserve and restore the natural environment; 2. Utilise resources efficiently; 3. Protect and enhance biodiversity; 4. Display strong environmental leadership.

### Scope

This policy applies to:

- Council's business as a whole - including Councillors, Council staff, contractors, volunteers and/or other representatives as part of their Council related functions or roles;
- Individuals, organisations or other groups organising an event or operating at a Council controlled site;
- Council staff organising, promoting, running, and/or approving events on behalf of Council;
- Individuals, organisations or other groups organising, promoting, running and/or approving an event which uses Council funding, seeks Council endorsement or uses a Council controlled site.

Events and activities which occur on a Council controlled site, but are not endorsed or funded by Council, and which do not require a Council event permit are not included in the mandatory scope of this policy. These types of events are encouraged by Council to voluntarily comply.

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## Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Balloon</b>	Coloured rubber bags inflated with air or water and then sealed at the neck, used as a child's toy or a decoration.
<b>Civic Event</b>	A formal event organised by Council staff for the community.
<b>Compostable items</b>	Products certified under Australian Home Composting Standard (AS5810), Australian Commercial Composting Standards (AS4736), consisting of paper, cardboard, wood, bagasse, bamboo, palm leaf, wheat, rye or otherwise approved by Council. Products with fossil-fuel based plastic lining are not considered compostable.
<b>Council approved event</b>	A prescribed activity which requires a permit under Council's Local Laws.
<b>Council controlled site</b>	Land, buildings, facilities, venues, roads, or any other location owned or controlled by Council. This includes any of the above which have been leased to an external organisation.
<b>Council endorsed or funded event</b>	An organised activity or event which has received Council funding, sponsorship or support, but which is run or delivered by other parties. For example, events funded by Community Grants or Council in-kind support.
<b>Council event</b>	A Council event includes functions, workshops, Council meetings or briefings, education sessions or other activity organised by Council.
<b>Recyclable items</b>	Items accepted in Council's co-mingled recycling collection service
<b>Reusable Items</b>	Items which can be used instead of conventional single-use items, including coffee cups, water bottles, food containers and bags.
<b>Single-use plastic</b>	Includes any petroleum-based disposable plastic and polystyrene items such as bags, cups, sachets, sandwich wedges, chip cups and food and drink packaging designed to be used once and then discarded. This includes degradable and oxo-degradable / biodegradable plastic products.  This includes single-use plastic items banned by the Queensland Government, including straws, stirrers, swizzle sticks, plates, unenclosed bowls, cutlery, polystyrene takeaway food containers and cups.
<b>Waste</b>	Under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> ,  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'Waste includes any thing, other than an end of waste resource, that is – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Left over, or an unwanted by-product, from an industrial, commercial, domestic or other activity; or</li> <li>b. Surplus to the industrial, commercial, domestic or other activity generating the waste.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Waste can be a gas, liquid, solid or energy, or a combination of any of them.</li> <li>3. A thing can be waste whether or not it is of value.'</li> </ol>
<b>Waste Hierarchy</b>	A guide for prioritising waste management practices with the objective of achieving optimal environmental outcomes. The most preferable option is to avoid producing the waste, this is followed by reduce, reuse, recycle, recover, treat and disposal.

## Provisions

Council commits to avoid single-use plastics at all Council events, Council endorsed or funded events and on Council controlled sites. Council also encourages event organisers and businesses to reduce waste and the environmental impact an event or business will have in the community.

Single-use plastics must be avoided where there is a commercially viable alternative in accordance with the Waste Hierarchy. Where these items cannot be avoided, they must be replaced with the following items, in order of preference:

- Reusable items
- Compostable items
- Recyclable items

## Processes

Council will avoid the use of single-use plastics in the local government area. This will be achieved by:

1. Prohibiting the use of single-use plastic products. This prohibition includes degradable and oxo-degradable/biodegradable plastic products. Additionally, the use of biodegradable bio-plastics (PLA) is to be avoided where possible;
2. Prohibiting the use of plastic bags and balloons;
3. Avoiding the environmental impacts of any products, supplies and promotional materials by choosing products and materials that minimise the use of single-use plastics;
4. Displaying strong environmental leadership in the community by avoiding the use of single-use plastics through action and education;
5. Encouraging and educate the community to use and accept reusable items in the course of their business and activities; and
6. Developing and maintaining positive and constructive relationships with event and market organisers and the community while applying a best practice plastic wise approach.

## Exemptions

Exemptions in relation to hygiene, healthcare, disability or workplace health and safety purposes can be applied for in writing.

## Related Legislation

*Environmental Protection Act 1994*

*Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*

## Related Documents (Local Laws, Policies, Forms)

Corporate Sustainability General Policy

Environmental (Council Operations) General Policy

Events General Policy

Port Douglas Markets Policy

Workplace Health and Safety General Policy

Community Support Program General Policy

## Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed whenever legislation changes, or every two years if no changes have been required to be enacted, at the direction of the Chief Executive Officer.

## Policy Details

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Single-Use Plastic Free Policy</b>
<b>Policy Number</b>	75
<b>Policy Version</b>	2
<b>Document Number</b>	985804
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Policy Type</b>	Council
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Council
<b>Date Adopted</b>	25/07/2023
<b>Time Period</b>	2 Years
<b>Review Date</b>	01/07/2025
<b>Policy Department</b>	Environment and Planning
<b>Link to Corporate Plan</b>	Leading Environmental Stewardship
<b>Revoked/Superseded</b>	

**This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.**