



Ku-ring-gai Council

Policy

Single-use Plastic Policy

Version Number: 2

Adopted: 21 March 2023

Effective: 22 March 2023



Single-use Plastic Policy

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Controlled Document Information

Authorisation Details

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Controlled Document Number:	161	TRIM Record No:	2023/075895
Controlled Document Type:	Policy		
Controlled Document Name:	Single-use Plastic Policy		
Version Number:	2		
Department:	Strategy and Environment		
Distribution:	Internal and external		
Review Period: Max < 4 years	4 years	Next Review Date:	January 2027
Document Status:	Adopted		
Approval Type:	Council resolution		
Version Start Date:	22 March 2023	Version End Date:	TBC

Related Document Information, Standards & References

Related Legislation:	Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001 Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 Local Government Act 1993 - Section 8A: 2(d) Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021	Councils should consider the principles of ecologically sustainable development in their decision-making processes.
Related Policies (Council & Internal)	Sustainable Event Management Policy	The requirements of the Single-use Plastic Policy should be implemented in conjunction with the requirements of the Sustainable Event Management Policy.
Related Documents - Procedures, Guidelines, Forms, WHS Modules/PCD's, Risk Assessments, Work Method Statements, etc	Sustainable Event Stallholder Guidelines Sustainable Catering Products for Council Events Sustainable Catering Guide for External Events Sustainable Caterers Guide Special Event Guidelines How to Run a Sustainable Event Guide	These documents support the implementation of the Single-use Plastic Policy and Sustainable Event Management Policy.

Version History

Version Number	Version Start Date	Version End Date	Author	Details and Comments
1	20 November 2019	21 March 2022	Manager Environment and Sustainability	First version
1	22 March 2023	TBC	Manager Environment and Sustainability	Revised second version adopted by Council 21 March 2022, resolution # 38.

Policy

Purpose

To phase out single-use plastics in the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area (LGA) through the elimination or reduction of single-use plastics in Council operations and in events run by Council and held on Council land, in Council facilities and in Council venues; advocating for legislative and policy change; and supporting responsible practices by the community and local businesses.

Objectives

- To demonstrate leadership through the elimination of single-use plastic cups, glasses, bottles, bags, plates, bowls, cutlery, straws, balloons, stirrers, disposable coffee cups (with plastic lining), coffee cup lids, single-use sachets, polystyrene and take away food containers from Council operations and internal and external events.
- To implement responsible procurement, packaging, sales, distribution and transportation practices to reduce or eliminate other single-use plastics in Council operations and internal and external events, including working with suppliers and contractors to avoid or minimise the use of plastic packaging from items purchased by Council and to provide alternative recyclable or reusable packaging materials to protect items, where appropriate.
- To facilitate a reduction in single-use plastics by the Ku-ring-gai community, event organisers and businesses through the delivery of single-use plastic reduction information campaigns and programs
- To advocate to state and federal government for legislative and policy change that supports the objectives of this Policy
- To implement responsible disposal and / or recycling practices for single-use / soft plastics, when single-use / soft plastic items are necessary to meet health and safety requirements or where there are no other practical alternative products or distribution methods available.

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All staff, Councillors, contractors and volunteers working for Ku-ring-gai Council
- All Council operations and internal Council events, including but not limited to workshops, meetings, briefings, celebrations and training events
- Major events run by Council or by external organisers held on Council land, in Council facilities and in Council venues
- Minor Council events held on Council land, in Council facilities and in Council venues, including but not limited to official functions, community forums and consultations and citizenship ceremonies.

This Policy does not apply to the day-to-day running of sports clubs and other community groups that hold small-scale events and functions as part of their normal operations; however, these organisations will be encouraged to transition towards the requirements of this Policy. Larger scale community and sporting events organised by sporting clubs and community groups, for example, sports gala days and fun runs, fall within the scope of this Policy.

Council will work collaboratively with sports and leisure facilities, namely, the Ku-ring-gai Fitness and Aquatic Centre (KFAC); the North Turramurra Golf Course and Recreation Area; and the Gordon Golf

Course to implement the requirements of this Policy. These requirements may be mandatory conditions of future lease agreements.

Council staff, Councillors, contractors and volunteers working for Ku-ring-gai Council are encouraged to act mindfully and responsibly when using single use-plastics for personal reasons whilst at work or when representing Council outside of the workplace.

Responsibilities

Council's Manager Environment and Sustainability is responsible for compliance with this Policy.

Policy Statement

Background

Plastic pollution is a significant global problem with serious environmental, social and economic impacts.

Plastic production is increasing exponentially – we have made over 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic since mass production began in the 1950s¹ and over the last ten years we have produced more plastic than during the whole of the last century². Over 1 million plastic bottles are purchased every minute around the world; an estimated 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are used annually worldwide; and around 500 billion disposable coffee cups are produced each year³.

In 2019/20, 3.4 million tonnes of plastics were consumed in Australia, with the national plastics recovery rate at only 13.1%⁴. One million tonnes of this plastic consumption are single-use plastics. In Australia alone, we consume and dispose of approximately 70 billion pieces of soft plastics that are 'scrunchable', for purposes such as food wrapping and packaging⁵.

Plastics, once in the ocean, are known to absorb a range of hazardous chemicals. Over time, toxins accumulate onto floating and drifting fragmented plastic debris. This makes it easier for marine life to mistake them for food and fill their stomachs with indigestible waste, which slowly starves them⁶. Rather than biodegrading, plastic breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces over hundreds of years, creating microplastics and nanoplastics. At every stage of its lifecycle, plastic poses distinct risks to human health, arising from both exposures to plastic particles themselves and the associated chemicals and the accumulation of microplastics in food chains. Both the creation and degradation of plastic releases harmful greenhouse gases, contributing to our planet's changing climate⁷.

Up to 9 of 10 seabirds⁸, 1 in 3 sea turtles⁹ and more than half of whale and dolphin species have ingested plastic¹⁰. It is estimated that over 100,000 marine mammals and over 1 million birds die every year from ingestion or entanglement in plastic litter¹¹. It is estimated that plastic pollution in our oceans will outweigh the number of fish by 2050¹².

¹ <https://www.take3.org/the-plastic-facts/>

² <https://plasticoceans.org/the-facts/>

³ <https://www.take3.org/the-plastic-facts/>

⁴ Australian Plastics Flows and Fates Study 2019-20 National Report (2021) Page 1

⁵ Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment National Plastics Plan (2021) Page 2

⁶ <https://www.marineconservation.org.au/ocean-plastic-pollution/>

⁷ <https://www.take3.org/the-plastic-facts/>

⁸ <http://www.pnas.org/content/112/38/11899.full.pdf>

⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2016/03/17/turtles-marine-plastic_n_9455496.html

¹⁰ S. Baulch and C. Perry: Marine Pollution Bulletin 80 (2014) 210–221

¹¹ <https://theoceancleanup.com/>

¹² Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment National Plastics Plan (2021) Page 2

This policy responds to the significant evidence that plastic pollution is a major cause of global environmental degradation and species decline; that the pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from plastics place an inequtable burden on future generations; that the production of plastics relies on non-renewable resources; and that plastic pollution persists in the environment and has detrimental effects on human health.

Policy requirements

To achieve the objectives of this Policy, the following requirements must be met:

- No single-use plastic cups, glasses, bottles, bags, plates, bowls, cutlery, straws, balloons, stirrers, disposable coffee cups (with plastic lining), coffee cup lids, single use sachets, polystyrene and take away food containers are to be purchased and / or used in Council operations and internal Council events, including but not limited to official functions, community forums and consultations, workshops, meetings, briefings, celebrations and training events
- No single-use plastic cups, glasses, bottles, bags, plates, bowls, cutlery, straws, balloons, stirrers, disposable coffee cups (with plastic lining), coffee cup lids, single use sachets, polystyrene and take away food containers are to be used, sold or distributed at: (i) major events delivered by Council and external organisers held on Council land / in Council facilities and venues; and (ii) minor Council events; including for promotional purposes.
- Free access to alternative water sources at major events, such as water fountains or water refill stations, must be provided.
- Plastic packaging should be avoided or minimised in Council operations and at internal and external events and alternative recyclable or reusable packaging materials used, where appropriate
- Responsible disposal and / or recycling practices for single-use / soft plastics, when single-use / soft plastic items are necessary to meet health and safety requirements or where there are no other practical alternative products or distribution methods available, must be practiced
- Event organisers must play a key role in educating and guiding their event staff and audience on single-use plastic free practices. This includes considering whether single-use plastic items are required in the first instance, providing useful information and promoting reusable alternatives.

This Policy should be read and implemented in conjunction with the Sustainable Event Management Policy and supporting documents.

Exemptions

Exemptions will be granted for plastic products that are required to meet health and safety requirements, or where there is no other practical alternative product or packaging, distribution or transportation method available.

Implementation

This Policy will be supported by a Single-use Plastic Reduction Operational Plan, delivered through the Environment and Sustainability section of Council, in collaboration with a number of sections across Council. Staff and financial resources will be dedicated to the implementation of this Policy by the Environment and Sustainability section.

Transition period

A transition period of 2 years was applied when the policy was first introduced to enable affected stakeholders to implement the requirements of this Policy in full. During this time, Council staff worked closely with affected stakeholders to support a swift as possible transition to the requirements of this Policy.

This transition period was successful and is now complete. The permanent policy is aligned with the State Governments current single-use plastics ban.

Enforcement

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in exclusion of the organisation or business responsible for the non-compliance in any future events held by Council, or inform Council's decision to reject a booking on land / facilities managed by Council for any future events hosted by the non-complying event organiser/s. Events on Council managed land will need to commit to comply with this Policy before any Council sponsorship for that event is approved.

Definitions

Term / abbreviation	Definition
Plastic	Biodegradable and non-biodegradable polyethylene made from petrochemical compounds.
Single-use plastics	Includes any disposable plastic and polystyrene items such as straws, balloons, bags, cutlery and food and drink packaging designed to be used once and then discarded.
Soft plastics	Items such as plastic bags, cling wrap, lolly wrappers, chip packets, freezer bags, shrink wrap and packaging plastics that cannot be recycled through the kerb-side yellow lid collection.
Single-use plastic sachets	Items such as tomato sauce, sugar, salt and pepper sachets, sunscreen sachets, or giveaways such as shampoo sachets, designed to be used once and then discarded.
Bioplastics	Plastics derived from renewable biomass sources, such as vegetable fats and oils, corn starch, straw, woodchips, food waste, etc.
Major event	Events held on Council land / in Council facilities and venues, including those delivered by Council and those delivered by external organisers, usually with greater than 500 people and involving community participation. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large festivals • Fetes and fairs • Cycling/fun run events • Outdoor concerts and viewings

Term / abbreviation	Definition
Minor Council event	<p>Events held on Council land / in Council facilities and venues and organised by Council, usually with fewer than 500 people and involving stakeholder and community participation. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship ceremonies • Public seminars, forums, workshops, events and celebrations • Community consultations • Author talks • Exhibition launches
Minor external event	<p>Events held on Council land / in Council facilities and venues run by external organisers, usually with fewer than 500 people and involving community participation. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, private gatherings • Wedding receptions • Non-commercial filming groups • Birthday parties • Small events funded through the Ku-ring-gai Community Grants program
Internal Council event	<p>Events held on Council land / in Council facilities and venues and organised by Council, usually with fewer than 100 people and mainly involving staff or Councillor participation. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch time seminars • Committee and Advisory Group meetings • Councillor briefings • Staff meetings, workshops and training events