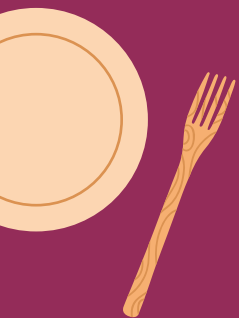
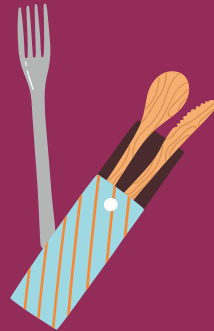


# PLASTIC FREE NORTH SYDNEY

## ALTERNATIVES TO SINGLE USE



# BACKGROUND

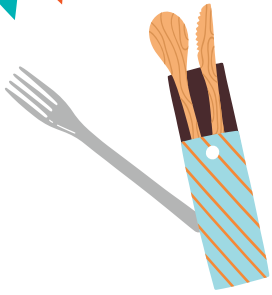
**In September 2019 North Sydney Council adopted a policy that aims to help phase out single use plastics from its buildings and other facilities.**

The “Single Use Plastic Policy” applies to Council’s operations, events, venues as well as community and third-party events in Council owned properties.

These guidelines are designed to assist Council staff, the community, hirers and lessees of Council facilities to comply with this policy, understand how to avoid single use plastic items and offers solutions for alternatives.



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# WHY?



## WHY PHASE OUT SINGLE USE PLASTICS?

**Single use plastics are used for their convenience and their ease of disposal has contributed towards a “throw-away culture”.**

Plastics are particularly problematic as most are made from non-renewable fossil fuels and they take hundreds of years to decompose. If littered they can find their way into waterways and the ocean, where marine animals can get entangled or mistake them for food, often with deadly consequences. They also break up into smaller fragments and eventually become micro plastics which attract, absorb and release toxic chemicals, significantly magnifying the toxicity of the original plastic fragment.

Worryingly, they are known to enter the food chain and bioaccumulate in animals as well as humans.

**As a harbourside council, North Sydney is taking a leadership role to reduce the number of single use plastic items in circulation.**



## WHO DOES THE POLICY APPLY TO?

The policy applies to all staff, councillors and suppliers involved in Council procurement, including caterers, stall holders, and hirers of Council facilities. It also applies to commercial tenants in Council owned properties with leases signed after the adoption of the policy.

## WHERE DOES THE POLICY APPLY?

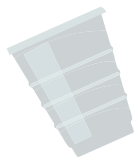
The policy applies to all Council buildings, facilities, community centres, parks, reserves, sports-grounds, pools and commercial tenancies.





## WHAT ITEMS DOES THE POLICY APPLY TO?

The policy applies to any disposable plastic item, including those made from polystyrene, that is designed to be used once and then discarded. Subject to the stated exceptions, these must be avoided where feasible and viable, even if the plastic is recyclable.



This includes but is not limited to:

- DISPOSABLE CUPS & LIDS
- STRAWS
- BAGS
- CUTLERY
- PLATES
- BOTTLED WATER
- TAKE AWAY CONTAINERS
- SINGLE SERVE SACHETS
- UNNECESSARY PACKAGING



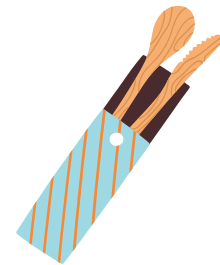
## EXCEPTIONS TO THE POLICY

Council has made some exceptions to accommodate health and safety regulations, medical and accessibility requirements, alcohol licensing conditions and existing lease agreements.

Council's General Manager can also grant exceptions on a case by case basis.

For Council's commercial tenants, the policy is limited to plastic straws and single use plastic bags, unless otherwise stated in the lease.

# ALTERNATIVES



## SINGLE USE PLASTICS ALTERNATIVES

As a rule, the following hierarchy should be applied when considering alternatives to single use plastics:

1 **BEST CHOICE!**  

## REDUCE & REUSE

Reduce the amount of resources and products required in the first place. Consider whether you need to provide the item at all. For example, do you need to provide plates, can your guests bring their own from home, or can you serve finger foods that don't need to be served on plates?

Choose items that can be used many times over to prevent unnecessary waste. For example, hire, borrow or use existing reusable cups, sauce dispensers, reusable cable ties etc.

Check if the venue has reusable cups, glasses and tableware available at [www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/communityfacilities](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/communityfacilities). Most hire companies will also accept return of dirty glasses and dishes for a prearranged washing fee.

Ask your guests to bring their own cups or water bottles. Council provides bubblers, taps and water refill stations in our community areas, parks and reserves.

Check the map at [www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bubblers](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bubblers) for more details.



# HOME COMPOSTABLE



If single use cannot be avoided, choose a compostable alternative that has been certified for home composting under AS 5810, TÜV OK compost home, NF T 51-800 or another equivalent international standard.

Certified home compostable products contain very little, if any, plastic and will break down into an organic material within six months in a home compost environment. As with other materials, it is important not to litter. Outside of a compost, degradation is much slower and while these items do not contain plastics, impacts on animals and the environment are similar to those from plastic.

If using home compostable products, provide a separate compost collection if feasible (see "Examples of Suppliers"). If this is not possible, the home compostable material will still have replaced non-renewable fossil-based items.

## HOME COMPOSTABLE ALTERNATIVES

Consider only if single use cannot be avoided.

**BAGASSE / SUGARCANE PULP** - The dry pulp that remains after sugarcane is crushed to extract its juice. It is renewable and home compostable.

**BAMBOO** - These products are renewable and home compostable.

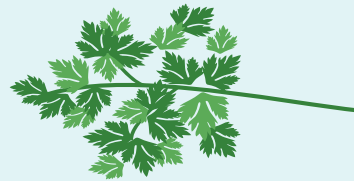
**CELLULOSE (e.g: Cellophane)** - This is a renewable (bio based) product that can be home and industrially composted.

**FSC CARDBOARD & PAPER** - FSC indicates that a product has Forest Stewardship Certification and comes from responsibly managed forestry sources. When substituting a single use plastic item with a paper or cardboard item it is important to ensure that it is certified under FSC.

**PALM LEAF** - These products are made from naturally shed palm sheaths of the Areca Palm. They are renewable and home compostable.

**POLYHYDROXYALKANOATES (PHA)** - These are renewable (bio based) and can be home and industrially composted.

**WOOD** - This is renewable and home compostable. Only use wood products that are FSC certified to ensure they come from responsibly managed forestry sources.



## AVOID INDUSTRIALLY COMPOSTABLE

Many single use items sold as "compostable" or "biodegradable" are only industrially compostable (AS 4736-2006, EN 13432, ASTM D6400, ASTM D6868, OK compost INDUSTRIAL, OK biobased, and other equivalent international standards). As these services are not widely available in many areas including North Sydney, these items are not accepted by Council. Many are also likely to contain plastics. For more details see "Materials to Avoid".

# MATERIALS TO AVOID



There are a lot of terms used on product labels that can be confusing, and even misleading. The definitions below are provided to help better understand what to look for and to avoid “green washing”. They are based on definitions used by the Australian Packaging Covenant.

## MUST BE AVOIDED

Avoid products that are only labelled with these terms unless they are also clearly certified as HOME compostable as they are either plastic or likely to contain plastic.

### BIODEGRADABLE

This is a generic term that indicates that a polymer is able to be broken down by microbes. It does not prescribe what products (including plastic) it is broken down to, to what extent degradation occurs, how long it takes, or what conditions are needed (i.e. home or industrial composting is not specified).

### BIO OR PLANT-BASED PLASTIC

These plastics are (at least in part) made from plant materials rather than fossil fuels, but it does not necessarily mean they are biodegradable or compostable.

### BIOPLASTIC

This is a confusing industry term that has two meanings. It could mean the plastic is biodegradable or that it is made from a renewable, but not biodegradable, material.

### BPI CERTIFIED COMPOSTABLE

These products are likely only compostable in industrial conditions and are therefore likely to contain plastic. BPI is North America’s leading certifier of compostable products and packaging but as North America does not have a home composting standard most certified products are not compliant with Council’s policy.

### COMPOSTABLE

This means that the product is designed to break down by biological processes at a rate consistent with other known compostable materials and leaves no visible, distinguishable or toxic residue. It may need industrial processing and is therefore likely to contain plastic.



A simple rule of thumb to use is:

**"IF IT FEELS AND LOOKS LIKE PLASTIC, IT'S PROBABLY PLASTIC".**





## MUST BE AVOIDED

### **CPLA**

Crystallised Polylactic Acid (PLA) is a renewable (bio based) product, that can only be industrially composted. It is used for items that need a high heat resistance such as cutlery and lids for coffee or soup.

### **DEGRADABLE**

These items are neither biodegradable nor compostable. Instead they will break up into smaller pieces of plastic.

### **INDUSTRIALLY COMPOSTABLE**

Items marked with AS 4736-2006, EN 13432, ASTM D6400, ASTM D6868, OK compost INDUSTRIAL, OK biobased or other equivalent international standards and are likely to contain plastic. They require specific conditions to break down that generally can only be met by purpose built industrial composting facilities. These are not widely available in many areas including North Sydney.

### **LANDFILL DEGRADABLE**

### **OXO-(BIO)DEGRADABLE**

### **PHOTO-DEGRADABLE**



These items are neither biodegradable nor compostable. Instead they will break up into smaller pieces of plastic.

### **POLYBUTYLENE ADIPATE TEREPHTHALATE (PBAT)**

This is a non-renewable (fossil fuel based) product that can only be industrially composted.

### **POLYCAPROLACTONE (PCL)**

This is a non-renewable (fossil fuel based) product that can only be industrially composted.

### **POLYLACTIC ACID (PLA)**

While this is a renewable (bio based) product, it can only be industrially composted.

### **POLYETHYLENE (PE)**

This is a conventional plastic that can be marketed as photo-degradable, landfill degradable or oxodegradable.

### **POLYPROPYLENE (PP)**

This is a non-renewable (fossil fuel based), non-compostable, conventional plastic. Many reusable fabrics, like "green bags", are made from PP.

### **POLYSTYRENE (EPS)**

This is a non-renewable (fossil fuel based), non-compostable, oxo-degradable plastic.

# PLASTIC FREE CHECK LIST

**FOR ALL SECOND BEST OPTIONS IN THIS GUIDE:**  
If using compostable materials, provide a separate compost collection for processing if feasible

## SHOPPING BAGS



### 1 BEST CHOICE!

No bags  
Use existing reusable bags, boxes or crates  
Repurpose cardboard boxes  
Borrow or purchase reusable bags e.g. from Boomerang Bags or other charities  
Provide reusable jute, hessian, canvas, calico or recycled street banner bags.  
Avoid reusable fabric-like bags made from Polypropylene

### 2 SECOND BEST

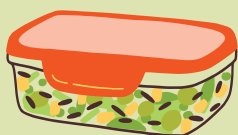
Use FSC certified paper bags or home compostable bags (AS 5810 or equivalent)

### X AVOID

Single use plastic bags, including (oxo) degradable plastic bags



## TAKE-AWAY FOOD CONTAINERS



No take away containers  
Consider providing finger food or one-hand food  
Encourage attendees to BYO reusable containers  
Use reusable tableware where available  
Borrow, hire or buy reusable tableware

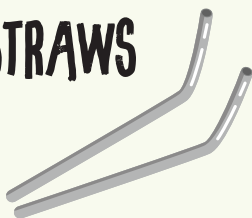
Use alternatives made from a home compostable (AS 5810 or equivalent) material

- Bamboo / Bio wood / pulp
- FSC Cardboard / FSC Paper (non – plastic lined)
- Palm (Areca) leaves
- Sugarcane / bagasse pulp

Single use plastic or polystyrene take-away containers



## STRAWS



No straws  
Encourage attendees to BYO reusable straws  
Provide reusable straws

Use home compostable (AS 5810 or equivalent) straws for attendees who require them

- Bamboo
- FSC Cardboard / FSC Paper (non – plastic lined)
- Pasta

Single use plastics straws, including industrially compostable PLA straws



## EXCESS PACKAGING

Talk to supplier to request reusable and returnable options for packaging e.g.: crates, boxes, reusable food containers or request that excess packaging is reduced or eliminated

Use or request home compostable (AS 5810 or equivalent) wrapping e.g Non-plastic lined FSC certified paper or cardboard  
Use or request recyclable aluminum foil

Unnecessary or excessive single use plastic packaging, e.g individually wrapped food items, foam and bubble wrapping, and landfill degradable plastic wrap



## SAUCE PACKETS & CONDIMENT SACHETS

1

**BEST CHOICE!**

Provide large containers for self-service  
Provide sauces and condiments in reusable tableware

2

**SECOND BEST**

Use in home compostable (AS 5810 or equivalent) packaging or tableware e.g Areca palm leaves, Bamboo / Wood pulp / FSC Paper (non – plastic lined) or Sugarcane / bagasse pulp

**X AVOID**

Single use plastic packets and sachets, including tomato sauce, mustard, mayonnaise, vinegar, soy sauce “fish”, wasabi, butter, and plastic lined sugar sachets

## BOTTLED WATER



No bottled water  
Encourage attendees to BYO reusable bottles  
Use existing reusable cups and glasses where available  
Use venue taps and water refill stations  
Borrow, hire or buy reusable water containers like jugs and water coolers (Council has some available for its own events)  
Hire / borrow reusable cups

**CHECK OUT**

[www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bubblers](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bubblers)

Until home compostable (AS 5810 or equivalent) alternatives are available, use non single use plastic recyclable alternatives

- Aluminum cans
- Cardboard packaging

Single use plastic bottled water



## CUPS & GLASSES



Use reusable cups and glasses where available  
Encourage attendees to BYO reusable bottles and cups  
Borrow, hire or buy reusable cups and glasses

**CHECK IF THE FACILITY HAS REUSABLE CUPS, GLASSES & TABLEWARE AVAILABLE AT**

[www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/communityfacilities](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/communityfacilities)

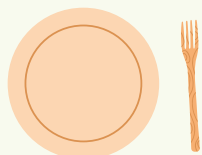
Use compostable (AS 5810 or equivalent) cups for cold liquids. Until home compostable (AS 5810 or equivalent) alternatives are available for hot liquids, use industrially compostable (AS 4736 or equivalent) items, like PLA lined paper cups. Use home compostable paper pulp or bagasse for hot liquid lids.

Clear single use plastic cups and glasses, including PLA and CPLA

Single use plastic cup lids including PLA and CPLA  
Polystyrene foam cups and lids



## TABLEWARE



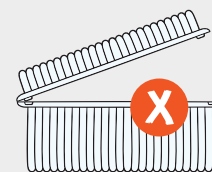
No tableware – consider providing finger food or one-hand food instead  
Use reusable tableware where available  
Borrow, hire or buy reusable tableware

**MOST HIRE COMPANIES WILL ACCEPT RETURN OF DIRTY GLASSES AND DISHES FOR A PREARRANGED WASHING FEE**

Use alternatives made from a home compostable (AS 5810 or equivalent) material

- Areca palm leaves
- Bamboo / Wood pulp
- FSC cardboard / FSC paper (non – plastic lined)
- Sugarcane / bagasse pulp

Single use plastic tableware



## UTENSILS



No utensils – consider providing finger food or one-hand food instead and use reusable tableware where available  
Borrow / hire / buy reusable utensils

Use compostable (AS 5810 or equivalent) utensils - e.g. wood or bamboo cutlery

Single use plastic utensils, including industrially compostable plant-based bioplastics (often white and marked as compostable)





## EXAMPLES OF SUPPLIERS



**This list is indicative and not exhaustive.**

You should carry out your own supplier analysis as the market rapidly changes.

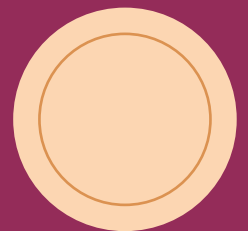
### Portable Water Stations:

- Sydney Water [www.lovetwater.sydney/portable-water-stations](http://www.lovetwater.sydney/portable-water-stations)
- Splash Down Event Services [www.splashdown.events/hydration-stations](http://www.splashdown.events/hydration-stations)
- Tranquil Water Supplies [www.tranquilwater.com.au](http://www.tranquilwater.com.au)
- We Refill [www.we-refill.com](http://www.we-refill.com)



### Reusable cups, coffee cups and tableware hire:

- Absolute Party Hire [www.absolutepartyhire.com.au](http://www.absolutepartyhire.com.au)
- AVA Party Hire [www.avapartyhire.com.au](http://www.avapartyhire.com.au)
- Globelet [www.globelet.com](http://www.globelet.com)
- Iwa Entertainment Pty Ltd [www.walkershire.com.au](http://www.walkershire.com.au)
- Ruzi [www.ruzi.com.au](http://www.ruzi.com.au)



### Home compost bins and worm farms:

- Compost Revolution [www.compostrevolution.com.au/northsydney](http://www.compostrevolution.com.au/northsydney)



### Industrial composting collections:

- Organic recycling group [www.org.com.au](http://www.org.com.au)
- Soilco [www.organicsrecycling.com.au](http://www.organicsrecycling.com.au)



### Take away coffee cup composting and recycling:

- Biopak [www.biopak.com.au/compost-service](http://www.biopak.com.au/compost-service)
- Recycle Me [www.detpak.com/recycleme/system](http://www.detpak.com/recycleme/system)
- Simply cups [www.simplycups.com.au](http://www.simplycups.com.au)

