

Plasticwise Policy 2018

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DEFINITIONS

Bottled water:	Drinking water, often spring water, sometimes carbonated, sealed in plastic bottles, intended to be discarded after consumption.
Civic event:	Events that are organised by Council staff for the community.
Event:	Any planned activity where any structure (permanent or temporary), open area, road way, fenced or unfenced area will contain a number of persons greater than that normally found in that area or location at one time.)
Plastic:	Biodegradable and non-biodegradable polyethylene made from petrochemical compounds.
Single use plastic bag:	A type of container made of thin, flexible, plastic film, nonwoven fabric, or plastic textile, designed for limited use and then discarded.
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.

INTRODUCTION

Indigo Shire Council recognises the negative impact that single-use plastics and excessive packaging has on the environment and the earth's resources. Single-use plastics have many environmental impacts across their lifecycle, from the resources required to manufacture and transport the product, to the end of life disposal impacts. Plastic does not biodegrade, rather it breaks down into smaller pieces which cause litter, are ingested by wildlife and are found in the food chain in micro-plastic form which is a growing human health concern.

Council aims to be a leader in sustainability, and will demonstrate its commitment by reducing single use plastics as far as practicable within council operations. Furthermore, council has a role to encourage, educate, and support businesses, clubs and communities within Indigo Shire to also reduce their consumption of single use plastics.

By implementing this Policy, Council is supporting the views and efforts of many of our local residents who want to reduce litter caused by single use plastic items and the effects of plastic pollution on our environment.

REFERENCE TO CURRENT OR PREVIOUS LEGAL /COUNCIL PLAN / POLICY

Council Plan 2017-2021

Purpose: Reducing our impact on the environment

Theme 4: Indigo's Environment and Sustainability

4.2 We support the reduction in community consumption of non-renewable resources

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all council staff, Councillors, contractors and volunteers working for Indigo Shire council.

This Policy applies to council operations and council-managed events, including but not limited to, official functions, civic events, community forums, listening posts, workshops, meetings, training events and parties.

The scope of the Policy aims to encourage improved planning and consideration of plastic waste, from the procurement phase, to use, and finally to disposal.

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

Events and activities occurring on council land, but not managed by council staff, are not included in the mandatory scope of this Policy, but shall be encouraged and supported by council to voluntarily comply.

PURPOSE

This purpose of this Policy is to formalise council's commitment to reducing or eliminating single use plastic within council operations and civic events. The Policy also sets the direction to promote broader shire-wide uptake of similar initiatives, via education, lobbying, incentives and support for community groups working on similar objectives.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council will take a leadership role in the reduction of single use plastics, by eliminating single use plastics in council's operational control, advocating for legislative changes, and influencing and enabling responsible consumption practices in the Shire.

POLICY DETAILS

To meet this Policy, Indigo Shire Council commits to:

- Progressively reducing, and eventually eliminating, single use plastic bags, single use plastic water bottles, single use plastic cutlery and crockery, soft plastic food wrapping, plastic straws and balloons within council operations and at all Council-managed and civic events.
- Implementing a communication and education campaign that encourages the community and traders across the Shire to progressively reduce single use plastic items, bottled water and plastic bags.
- Providing support and assist organisations or individuals (external to council) to voluntarily comply with this Policy, when undertaking events and/or during their normal operations.
- Providing alternatives to bottled water in Indigo Shire towns, via water fountains with water bottle refill functionality.
- Implementing responsible procurement practices and working with suppliers and contractors to avoid soft plastic packaging in purchased products wherever possible.
- Support and enable community groups that are driving Plasticwise and other related programs in the community.
- Implementing a sound stewardship model to ensure appropriate disposal of products that council purchases and uses, including:
 - Ensuring the correct waste receptacles to enable source segregation of the various waste streams generated at each event are available and well signed.
 - Ensuring that composting occurs if compostable alternatives to single use plastics are selected.
 - Collecting soft plastic packaging from council operations and events (where it could not practicably be avoided, i.e. purchased products where no alternative was available) and ensuring the soft plastics are delivered to a soft plastics collection point.

ADVOCACY

Council also commits to advocating for Government policy change to reduce plastic bags and bottled water.

COMMUNICATION

This Policy is communicated to all Indigo Shire staff, via the online learning management system. The Policy is also made available on council's website and publicised via multiple communication channels to increase uptake of the initiative by external parties in the Shire.