

# SCS-008 Plastic Wise Events and Markets on Council owned/managed land

TRIM Reference: D18/132255 Due for Review: 31 March 2023  
Responsible Officer: Manager Environment and Community Safety

## Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's (Council) commitment to eliminating single use plastic items at events, markets and organised sporting activities held at all sites owned and managed by Council.

## Policy Principles

Council and our community recognise the negative impacts that single use plastics and excessive packaging have on the local environment and on the earth's natural resources. Lightweight, single use plastics are often littered or blown from one place to another, entering waterways and oceans, and impacting native wildlife and food chains. Traditional plastics are made from fossil fuel sources (oil), which over time, break up into smaller and smaller pieces (microplastics) that are also known to have harmful effects on environmental and human health.

Developed in 2016 with our community, organisers of local events, and the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, this policy is Council's commitment to take local action on this global issue.

The State Government has since introduced a ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags (1 November 2019) and will expand this to include plastic straws, cutlery, drink stirrers, polystyrene food and drink containers and cotton bud sticks from February 2023. Additionally, releasing balloons into the environment is now illegal under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* (from 1 July 2021).

## Scope

### Events

This policy applies to all events, markets and regular/organised sporting activities conducted on land, in buildings, at venues and on roads owned or managed by Council. It includes all civic, commercial and community events such as markets, festivals, ceremonies, exhibitions, expos, meetings, functions, workshops, information sessions, conferences, parties, competitive sporting events, and other organised sporting and recreational activities.

### Single use plastic items

This policy covers single use plastic and polystyrene items used in purchasing, packaging, sales, distribution, transportation, set up and pack down (bump in and bump out), participation, promotion and clean up practices associated with events. Refer to sections 2.3 and 2.4 for details of products covered.

### Exemptions

Exemptions will be made for valid health, wellbeing or safety reasons, or where there is no practical alternative product or option currently available. All exemptions require prior written approval from Council's Coordinator Events – to be arranged through a Council officer associated with the event.

### Application

This policy applies to all Surf Coast Shire Council employees and contractors, and all individuals, groups or organisations planning, organising, running and/or approving events, markets and sporting activities at

Council sites. It includes stallholders/vendors, sponsors, contractors, volunteers and service providers who are on site as part of the event.

Event organisers must demonstrate how they will achieve compliance with this policy through the event planning process, such as the Event Brief (internally organised events) or Event Application (externally organised events).

The Plastic Wise Guide for Markets and Events in Surf Coast Shire, available at [www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/plasticwise](http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/plasticwise), provides guidance for meeting the requirements of this policy.

In implementing this policy, Council works in partnership with other Crown land managers, including the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, who share the goal of reducing plastic in the environment.

### **Organised sporting and recreational activities**

Council officers will support Council owned and managed sporting facilities and community sporting clubs operating at Council sites to become compliant with this policy by December 31 2023 or sooner.

## **Policy**

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to eliminating single use plastic items at events, markets and organised sporting activities held at all sites owned and managed by Council.

Expectations outlined in this policy aim to avoid unintended negative impacts – by considering current options for managing items at the end of their use, and being clear that the priority is to remove the risk of plastic having a harmful impact on the natural environment. More broadly, Council is committed to the target of zero recoverable waste being sent to landfill or finding its way into the environment.

### **1. Expected outcomes of this policy**

- 1.1 Deliver Council and community events that demonstrate the principles of the waste hierarchy – prioritising avoidance, reduction, reuse, then recycling, with disposal being the last resort.
- 1.2 Apply a best practice plastic wise approach to all Council run events.
- 1.3 Help our community to achieve, (or advance towards) a best practice plastic wise approach for events and markets that they run.
- 1.4 Develop and maintain positive and constructive relationships with event and market organisers and our community.
- 1.5 Ensure the Surf Coast Shire Plastic Wise Guide for Markets and Events is kept up to date to assist all event organisers to operate consistently with this policy.

### **2. Expected event outcomes**

#### Before the event – planning

- 2.1 Event organisers plan to incorporate and accommodate the principles of the waste hierarchy before, during and after the event.
- 2.2 Event organisers are active in educating and guiding their event staff (including volunteers, contractors, service providers), vendors/stallholders, sponsors, patrons and participants on why a plastic wise approach is important and what practices should be followed, including:
  - Eliminating all disposable plastic items where possible;
  - encouraging and enabling the use of reusable alternatives;
  - ensuring that no plastic items become litter at the event site; and
  - providing information and infrastructure to assist with achieving the above.
- 2.3 Some plastics are both a greater risk to the environment and/or more easily avoided or replaced. Recognising this, the following products are not used, sold or distributed (unless an exemption is granted for health, wellbeing or safety reasons):
  - Single use plastic bags, including promotional or event participant bags;
  - single use plastic plates, bowls, cups, straws, cutlery, food containers and sachets;
  - single use/disposable items and plastic packaging used for promotional items, giveaways and merchandise;
  - plastic bottled water (also refer to 2.6 about the provision of drinking water); and
  - balloons.

- 2.4 Some plastics remain a risk to the environment; however they are currently less easily avoided or replaced. Recognising this, if they cannot be eliminated immediately, event organisers demonstrate a shift away from the following (unless an exemption is granted for health, wellbeing or safety reasons):
- Single use, plastic lined and/or plastic lidded cups used for hot or cold drinks (e.g. takeaway coffee cups);
  - single serve drinks (in addition to water) that are packaged in plastic bottles, e.g. soft drink, juice, milk, etc. (Note: also refer to Council's Local Law 2, section 4.1.2 Glass Free Areas).
  - soft plastic packaging including cling wrap, wrappers, bags and similar; and
  - single use or limited use plastic items used in event infrastructure and promotion, including cable ties, course markings, decorations and giveaways.
- 2.5 Cigarette butts, which consist mostly of plastic with a thin paper coating, are contained and prevented from entering the natural environment, and disposed of to landfill after the event.
- 2.6 Access to free drinking water is provided (unless the event location prevents this) and clearly signed, along with alternatively packaged water if it is required.
- 2.7 Organisers of events that require an Event Brief (Council run events) or Event Application (external events) provide to Council a waste management plan.
- 2.8 All events, regardless of whether they require a waste management plan, strive to meet the following waste management outcomes:
- Certified compostable cups, cutlery, containers, packaging, etc. are collected and sent for processing into compost;
  - if it cannot be avoided, soft plastic packaging is collected for recycling through a separate waste stream; and
  - event materials (e.g. event signage, promotional banners, flags and course markings) are designed for future reuse, rather than disposal.

#### During the event – delivery and performance monitoring

- 2.9 Event organisers are active in educating and guiding their event staff (including volunteers, contractors, service providers), vendors/stallholders, sponsors, patrons and participants on why a plastic wise approach is important and what practices should be followed.
- 2.10 No items, including small items such as cable ties and cigarette butts, become litter.
- 2.11 Event organisers monitor their event and collect evidence (e.g. photos) that illustrate the effectiveness of their plastic wise approach and waste management systems with the intention to identify opportunities for improvement for future events and for this policy.

#### After the event – clean up and evaluation

- 2.12 The event site or venue is left litter free and returned to pre-event conditions in the agreed timeframe, and with no risk of litter items impacting the environment, e.g. waterways, in this time. (Note: any site remediation required will be at the expense of the event organiser).
- 2.13 Event organisers should review their event against the expected event outcomes of this policy (section 2) to identify opportunities for improvement for future events and for this policy.

### **3. Council officer responsibilities**

Council officers involved in the planning, approval and/or delivery of events will:

- Apply a best practice plastic wise approach to all Council run events;
- seek to develop and maintain positive and constructive relationships with event and market organisers and our community;
- help our community to achieve, or make progress towards a best practice plastic wise approach for events and markets that they run;
- ensure that the Surf Coast Shire Plastic Wise Guide for Markets and Events is updated in line with the next policy review, to assist all event organisers to operate consistently with this policy;
- when there is repeated, poor adherence to this policy, recommend to Senior Management that these events not be supported or approved by Council; and
- ensure that events receiving Council grants and/or sponsorship commit to complying with the policy before support is made available.

## Local Government Act 2020 Principles

Principles	Applicable to policy	If yes, provide details
<b>Governance Principles</b> (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy relates to Section 9(2)(c) 'the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district is to be promoted'.
<b>Community Engagement</b> (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	Yes	Development of this policy in 2016 and the review in 2018 involved collaboration (IAP2) with local event and plastic wise community groups. Minimal community engagement occurred in the 2021 review due to the limitations on in-person events due to COVID-19, however it will be relevant to involve/collaborate on the following review.
<b>Public Transparency</b> (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy is easily accessible to the community, and clearly referenced in Council's event application processes.
<b>Strategies and Plans</b> (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy links to strategies in the 2016-2020 and 2021-2025 Council Plans, and aligns with Council's ongoing aspiration to demonstrate environmental leadership.
<b>Financial Management</b> (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	No	
<b>Service Performance</b> (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	Yes	This policy contributes to enhanced enjoyment of local events, and reduced pressure on waste management systems.

## Definitions

Event	Any planned activity that occurs in a certain place, during a certain time, which involves a gathering of people and has some level of impact on the immediate surroundings.
Civic event	Any event organised by Council staff.
Commercial event	An event conducted for profit.
Community event	An event conducted by or for the community.
Sporting and recreational activities	Any regular or organised sporting or recreational activity occurring at Council owned or managed sites, including those run by community sporting clubs.
Council sites	Land, buildings, venues, roads or any other location owned or managed by Council.
Single use plastics	Any disposable plastic or polystyrene item that is designed to be used only once or for a short period of time before being discarded. They include, but are not limited to, plastic bags, cups, bowls, plates, cutlery, straws, bottled water, sachets (e.g. sauces, sunscreen), containers, packaging and other similar items. For the purpose of this policy, it also applies to balloons, disposable paper cups with plastic linings and/or lids (for hot or cold drinks), plastic glitter, glow sticks and confetti, and single use or disposable plastic promotional items and giveaways.
Plastic	Polyethylene, polystyrene and polypropylene made from petrochemical compounds, including degradable and biodegradable products made from these compounds.

Bioplastic	<p>A term that can describe either <i>bio-based</i> or <i>biodegradable</i> plastic, including plastic made with or without the use of petrochemical compounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bio-based plastic: Plastic made from natural bio-polymers – i.e. organic and renewable matter such as rice, starch, sugar cane, wheat or corn. Despite their origins, some bio-based products are designed to behave like traditional plastics and do not biodegrade.</li> <li>• Biodegradable plastic: Plastic that has the potential to break down into its natural components over a period of time. These products can be made from natural and/or fossil fuel based materials.</li> </ul>
Certified compostable	A subset of biodegradable plastic, made from material assessed to be safe to compost in a commercial or home composting environment in accordance with Australian Standards (AS4736 and AS5810-2010 respectively).
Single use plastic bag	A type of bag or pouch made from thin, flexible, plastic film that is used for containing or transporting goods, designed to be used only once or for a short period of time before being discarded. For the purpose of this policy, this definition includes both thin (35 microns) and heavier weight disposable or limited use plastic bags.
Soft plastics	Plastic products that can be easily scrunched up in your hand and cannot be recycled through Council's kerbside recycling collection. They include, but are not limited to, plastic bags (including shopping bags, freezer bags and garbage bags), cling wrap, lolly wrappers, chip packets, shrink wrap, bubble wrap and other packaging.
Plastic bottled water	Drinking water sealed in plastic bottles designed or intended to be discarded after consumption.
Waste hierarchy	The waste hierarchy ranks waste management options in order of their general environmental desirability. Rankings are Avoid (most preferred); Reduce; Reuse; Recycle and Dispose (least preferred).

## Related Procedures

- Event Brief – submitted for events organised by Council staff
- Event Application – submitted for events organised external to Council
- Plastic Wise Guide for Markets and Events (Edition 2, October 2021) available at [www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/plasticwise](http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/plasticwise).

## References

- Victorian Government single-use plastics ban [www.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics](http://www.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics)
- Victorian Government plastic bag ban [www.vicbagban.com.au](http://www.vicbagban.com.au)
- Environment Protection Authority and balloon releases [www.epa.vic.gov.au/balloons](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/balloons)
- Barwon South West Zero Waste Event Guide (2020) [www.reduce-recycle.com.au/community/event-guide/](http://www.reduce-recycle.com.au/community/event-guide/)

## Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	<i>Adopted</i>	<i>Council Resolution – 26 April 2016</i>
2	<i>Amended</i>	<i>Council Resolution – 23 October 2018</i>
3	<i>Amended</i>	<i>Council Resolution – 23 November 2021</i>