

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BY-LAW

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



1. Do we have a problem with plastic and litter in Hobart?

Plastic pollution is one of the most common forms of marine debris and the waters around Hobart are not immune. Whether it ends up as litter or into landfill, there is considerable public momentum to reduce availability of non-compostable products as a means to reduce environmental impact.

2. Will compostable packaging fix the takeaway litter issue?

Data from the Environment Protection Authority Tasmania indicates that up to 50 per cent of litter is comprised of takeaway rubbish. Compostable packaging is not considered to be a solution to litter because not even compostable packaging breaks down quickly and harmlessly in the environment. Solutions to litter lie in behavioural change, an overall reduction in the consumption of packaging, as well as the provision of pathways for recovery of compostable litter.

3. Will all businesses be affected by the single-use plastic by-law?

The by-law only applies to businesses that provide or sell food in packaging that can be taken from the premises and consumed.

The by-law will encourage retailers to replace current single-use plastic containers which are smaller than one litre (1L) in volume or an area equivalent to A4 (210 mm by 297 mm) in size.

All packaging larger than these dimensions is not affected.

The implementation of the by-law will facilitate the replacement of plastics and may encourage innovation and new business opportunities.

The by-law does not apply where a retailer provides or sells food packaging supplied by the customer (e.g. coffee cups or Tupperware containers); or the customer was not provided food packaging by the retailer or a related entity of the retailer (e.g. a bottle of soft drink).

4. What type of packaging is allowed and what isn't in Hobart?

✔ Allowed

Bottled beverages (glass/plastic/metal)

Serviettes, wooden cutlery

Paper wrapping (non-waxed, non-toxic inks)

Plastic pre-wrapped chocolate bars/lollies/biscuits/chips

Plastic pre-wrapped ice creams

Wooden stirring sticks

Paper sugar/salt/pepper sachets

Cardboard cup trays / boxes

Plastic pre-wrapped fruit and vegetables

Certified compostable bioplastics (cold drink cups, bowls, cutlery, lids, sandwich wedges, noodle boxes, coffee cups, hot chip boxes)

Pizza boxes

Long-life reusable plastic containers

✘ Not allowed

Plastic cutlery

Sauce sachets (e.g. tomato, soy, tartare)

Plastic takeaway hot food containers and lids

Takeaway plastic straws

Plastic lined noodle boxes

Plastic lined coffee cups

Plastic lids on takeaway cups

Plastic sandwich wedges

5. Will there be a cost?

The costs to each individual business will vary depending on the number and types of packaging products, packing supplier and the size of business operations. The overall cost to the DKHAC pool café for example was less than 1 per cent of annual turnover and they were required to switch or substitute a wide range of items.

Current Tasmanian packaging suppliers include compostable products among their range, so compliant products can be sourced locally. The by-law is expected to stimulate the development of new packaging products and solutions and one such supplier of reusable takeaway containers in Tasmania has already emerged.

6. Why is there an infringement associated with non-compliance of the by-law?

Penalties are an essential part of any by-law, however they are a last resort.

The two penalty units associated with the single-use plastic by-law is consistent with other by-law infringements such as;

- failing to maintain premises used by animals
- Keeping a rooster
- Keeping too many bee hives.

The penalty unit amount is set by the State Government. The two penalty units is applicable for an infringement notice which can be issued by a council officer. An up to eight penalty unit infringement is assessed if the matter is prosecuted.

7. Need help?

Please review the website information at hobartcity.com.au/singleuseplastics or contact the Waste Education Officer on 03 6278 0235.