

PLASTIC FREE COUNCIL EVENTS GUIDELINES QLD



BOOMERANG
ALLIANCE

TERMS OF USE

Boomerang Alliance, through the Plastic Free Places program, has developed these guidelines for use by local councils. First published July 2019.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABOUT BOOMERANG ALLIANCE

We are a national peak not-for-profit group formed in 2003 with the aim of a zero-waste society. We comprise 50 national, state and local allies. Our core strategic objectives are:

- 1.) To transition to a zero-waste society by leveraging strategic opportunities to drive best practice resource efficiency and recovery.
- 2.) To cut 70% of Australia's contribution to plastic pollution entering the oceans by 2020.

Find out more at www.boomerangalliance.org.au

ABOUT PLASTIC FREE PLACES

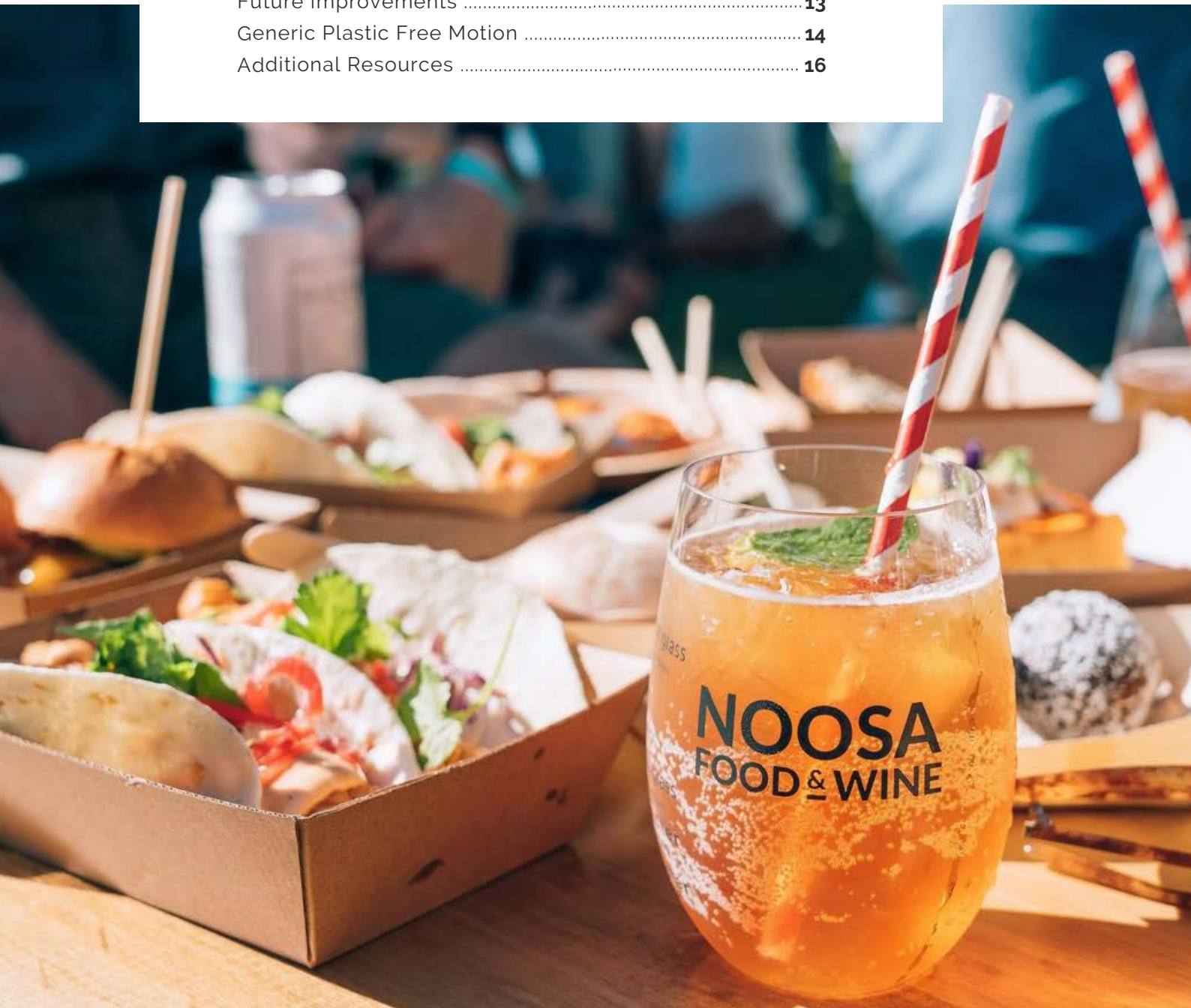
The Plastic Free Places program works in communities to directly reduce single-use plastic items, and to empower the community to make lasting changes towards a circular economy. The program is a partnership between Boomerang Alliance and the Australian Packaging Covenant (APCO).

Find out more at www.plasticfreeplaces.org



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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND (LGAQ)

FOREWORD BY GREG HALLAM AM, CEO

Queensland councils have been at the forefront of acting to reduce plastic waste and litter as part of our efforts to create better communities. Our wonderful natural environment provides Queenslanders and visitors an opportunity to enjoy a healthy outdoor lifestyle, however, we are well aware of the threats that plastic litter can have on these sites. And we want to ensure that we play a part in protecting them.

With global and national attention on reducing single-use plastics, Queensland councils are cutting down on single-use plastics and demonstrating to others how it can be done. At last year's LGAQ Conference (2018) Queensland councils supported motions to phase out plastic straws and other single-use plastics from council operations and events, to support a transition away from plastics and support a ban on the deliberate release of helium balloons.

In response to the state-wide resolution to transition away from single-use plastics, LGAQ would like to support the collaborative efforts of the Queensland State Government and the Boomerang Alliance in developing practical guidelines for councils to enable community based events to be plastic-free.

We encourage all Queensland councils to consider the adoption of these guidelines and lead the way on plastic reductions in their communities.

Switching from single-use plastics to reusable or 100% compostable product alternatives at events is a positive contribution we can make towards reducing plastic litter and waste, and to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

These guidelines are available for everyone and we encourage all other event organisers and local councils around Australia to use them for your own plastic-free events.

Greg Hallam AM
Chief Executive Officer
LGAQ

A MESSAGE FROM LEEANNE ENOCH, QLD MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Queensland Government is committed to transitioning to a zero-waste society where waste is avoided, reused and recycled as much as possible.

This Plastic Free Council Events Guidelines has been developed to enable Queensland councils to lead the community in delivering plastic free events and reduce plastic pollution.

Plastic waste is not only harmful to our environment, but also to our marine life with about 75 percent of the marine debris collected along the Queensland coastline made up of plastic materials.

This is why plastic has been identified as priority waste under the new Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy.

The use of single-use plastic bags has already been banned in Queensland and we are continuing to reduce the amount of plastics impacting our environment through a comprehensive Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan.

The Queensland Government was proud to fund Boomerang Alliance to develop a community-based model to phase out the use of single use plastic products.

I encourage all councils running their own event or hosting or sponsoring events to make use of these guidelines and to continue to protect the diverse wildlife and environment from the negative effects of plastic litter and pollution.

The Hon Leeanne Enoch MP
Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef,
Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts

BACKGROUND

At the Local Government Association Queensland Annual Conference 2018 (30-31 October) the following motion was overwhelmingly carried.

That the Local Government Association of Queensland:

- 1 Support Queensland local governments to commit to phase out plastic straws and other single-use plastic items from council operations and events; and
- 2 Lobby the State Government to develop a state-wide local communities and industry transition away from single-use plastic items; and
- 3 Lobby the Queensland Government to ban the deliberate release of helium balloons.

This document is in response to this motion and provides councils with a guide on making council-run events plastic-free*.

The guide can also be used to encourage other events to follow the council lead and both avoid single-use plastics and, in consequence, reduce littering and waste from these items.

This guide supports the Queensland Government's upcoming Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan, a plan designed to reduce the amount of plastic litter and waste that enters the environment. The Plan will be evidence based and prioritise actions that are comprehensive and coordinated, and responds to the growing community concerns about the use of single-use and disposable plastics.

*Plastic-free refers to the provision of non-plastic or alternative items by vendors and event organisers to the public at events. It includes the elimination of single-use, non-compostable food ware (coffee cups/lids, straws containers, bags, utensils and water bottles etc.) and the use of other problematic litter items such as helium balloons.



PURPOSE OF THE EVENTS GUIDELINES

The guidelines have been produced following assessment of other council and organisation event guides and has also drawn on the valuable experience gained in delivering plastic-free public events through the Boomerang Alliance's successful Plastic Free Noosa project.

This document was developed as a resource for all councils across Queensland. It is practical and easily adopted for events. For councils who already have event guides in place, this document is a reference point to implement further improvements.

Councils have the opportunity to set the standard for how public events can be delivered, and all councils are encouraged to adopt these guidelines.

With global, national and community attention now focused on single-use plastics and their consequences, this guide enables councils to take a leadership role and respond to community expectations by providing some practical solutions to single use plastics in the away-from-home situation.



THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTICS AT EVENTS

PLASTIC POLLUTION GENERATED FROM PUBLIC EVENTS can be a major cause of environmental degradation, species decline and potential human health impacts.

PLASTIC LITTER IS AN EYESORE and contaminates our open and public places, negating the positive experience of these events.

SINGLE-USE, DISPOSABLE PLASTICS are a waste of resources and do not align with the values of sustainable events.

PLASTICS DERIVED FROM NON-RENEWABLE SOURCES such as fossil fuels contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, and event organisers have a responsibility to protect our environment.

PLASTICS PERSIST IN LANDFILL AND THE ENVIRONMENT and pose a problem for future generations, and event organisers have a responsibility to reduce the amount of waste generated.

PLASTIC FREE EVENT PRINCIPLES

COMMITMENT TO INFORM and educate stakeholders and the public about your plastic-free event. Identify clear expectations of stallholders to avoid the use of identified single-use plastic items at council-run events.

CLEARLY IDENTIFY single-use plastic items that should be avoided or replaced and outline recommended alternative products. These should either be reusable or 100% compostable (compliant with Australian composting standards).

MANAGE THE COLLECTION of discarded materials through a three-bin system (recycle, organics, waste). Where these services do not exist, use a two-bin system (recycle and waste). The Container Refund Scheme provides an incentive for a separate drink container collection.

ENHANCE THE REPUTATION of the event by ensuring the site is free from plastic and other litter.

MINIMISE CONTAMINATION and reduce waste collection costs by keeping disposal options together and providing clear signage that addresses and advises on avoiding items being put in the wrong bin. Where possible, arrange volunteers to monitor bins and provide assistance and guidance to event patrons.

ENSURE ALL WASTE STREAMS are serviced appropriately. Investigate commercial composting, Container Refund Scheme collection and re-use service opportunities.

MONITOR AND EVALUATE the impact of plastic-free events through efficient data collection to measure performance and practices at events.

PROMOTE COUNCIL POLICIES to other events and encourage their adoption by including council requirements for events on council land and for council-funded events to be plastic free.



GUIDELINES IN PRACTICE

AS A FIRST STEP, focus on eliminating the six single-use plastic items that are most often littered and found in the waste stream. These are water bottles, coffee cups and lids, straws, food ware (cups, plates, cutlery etc.), takeaway containers, and plastic bags.

DO NOT ALLOW the release of helium-filled balloons. A practical way to avoid them would be to prohibit their use and recommend alternative decorative items or commemorative activities.

ALL FOOD AND DRINK VENDORS should be required to provide only reusable or 100% compostable food ware (cutlery, plates, containers, cups etc) to the public.

INCLUDE SPECIFIC requirements in any contracts or arrangements with vendors. Vendors should be informed of policies and why they have been adopted. This should also apply to franchise vendors. Compostable food ware should meet either the AS 4736 (commercial compost standard) or the AS 5810 (home compost standard). These are Australian Standards recommended by the Australian Packaging Covenant (APCO). Products are readily available from suppliers.

PROVIDE ADEQUATE, clearly signed water bubblers or portable water stations and encourage the use of refillable water bottles. These can avoid plastic water bottles being used. Consider accessibility by children and those with mobility aids.

CONSIDER USING refillable drinkware, where possible. A refillable system for alcohol and soft drinks involves the public purchasing (or providing a deposit) and keeping a cup for the event. No drinks can be served without a refillable cup. These can be replaced each time if desired. Refillable containers could be branded and used repeatedly at council events.

WHERE REFILLABLES are not provided, events should provide drinks in either aluminium cans, glass bottles or certified compostable containers (subject to local regulations for container use at events).

PROMOTE THE EVENT as plastic-free. Educate staff, volunteers, vendors and suppliers about the plastic-free agenda.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS provided by event organisers, vendors, performers etc. should be reusable, recyclable or compostable for consistency.



A COLLECTION SERVICE for beverage containers should be provided, now that they are subject to the QLD Container Refund Scheme. We suggest that Council arrange for a local not-for-profit group to receive the refund.

ARRANGE FOR WASTE COLLECTORS to transport waste to appropriate facilities. Note that in some regions where a commercial composter is not available, it will not be possible to compost. It is still advisable to follow a plastic-free practice as this demonstrates a commitment to reducing plastic pollution in the environment if the event generates litter. This also prepares stallholders and the public for when established in future.

EVENT ORGANISERS should ensure their office and back-of-house practices meet the above requirements and avoid the use of single-use plastics to the best of their ability. This should include any on-site facilities (ie. toilets) or crowd controls (ie. plastic film to cover fencing).

WE RECOMMEND THE ENGAGEMENT of an on-site Waste Manager, particularly for larger events or where litter and waste management may be challenging.

MATERIAL COLLECTION STATIONS should focus on a three-bin system for compost, recycling and waste, subject to composting services being available.

CLEAR SIGNAGE IS ESSENTIAL, pictures are most useful. To ensure correct use it is advisable to place volunteers at bin stations to show the correct usage and ensure effective and timely collection of full bins.

DATA COLLECTION IS ESSENTIAL to monitor performance and improve services. It is recommended that data is kept on quantities of materials sent for recycling, composting and waste. Your waste collectors should be able to provide this data. Monitoring compliance by vendors is important too. Surveys of public understanding will improve collection services, signage and public education programs.



Note: The template for this signage and details on bin covers is available from the Plastic Free Places website. www.plasticfreeplaces.org.



QUICK GUIDE

SEVEN STEPS TO A PLASTIC-FREE EVENT

- 1** Advertise and promote the event as plastic-free.
- 2** Require all vendors to supply only reusable or 100% compostable food ware (Australian standard or equivalent) to their customers at the event (plates, cups, utensils, containers etc.). Do not allow helium balloons to be used or released.
- 3** Provide a water station or water refill points on site for refillable bottles.
- 4** Provide recycling, composting (where applicable) and waste bins on site.
- 5** Good and clear signage is essential. Ideally provide bin monitors to explain how the system works.
- 6** Arrange for your waste service to transport collected materials to appropriate facilities and provide waste data.
- 7** Review data and management arrangements on the plastic-free outcomes and set new improved requirements for future events.



FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

These guidelines put focus on identified problematic plastic items used at events. The aim is to address the use of these items first. Through continuous improvements, other plastic products can be addressed at a future point. These could include back of house plastics such as vendor bulk packaging or disposable plastics used for staging and equipment or crowd control.

Other products such as salt/pepper, sauce and sugar sachets have not been included, but could be, or could be the subject of future improvements. This is subject to meeting any health regulations

Should there be no, or limited access to commercial composting in your region, the application of these guidelines will help produce a compost stream from events, and coupled with increased use of compostable food ware at food outlets, markets and other events, create opportunity for new composting services in your region as well as encouraging the wider adoption of home composting.

Councils could also consider reusable food ware systems at events. This would involve the provision of reusable crockery and cutlery to vendors. A local community group could be engaged and funded to provide clean up services and a washing station to wash and restock vendors.

GENERIC PLASTIC FREE MOTION

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL MOTION 2019

The <<ENTER COUNCIL NAME HERE>>,

Noting with concern the significant issue that single-use plastics pose to the general and marine environments, and the burden and high cost they represent to the waste management sector,

Recognising that Council is committed to reducing the quantity of single-use plastics procured and used within the local community and to lead by example,

Also recognising that Council is committed to operating under sustainable practices; protecting land, marine and coastal environments; reducing waste and increasing resource recovery, and promoting local, ethical and sustainable products,

Council will introduce a Plastic Free Guide for all Council events, and:
(options - pick one and reword as required)

- 1 effective immediately, ban the use of single-use plastics in all Council run events. The ban affords existing facilities and vendors a 6-month grace period to source alternatives to single-use plastics. Council will facilitate the provision of information on sourcing alternatives to events operating, or seeking to operate, within the Council area.

OR

- 1 phase out the use of single-use plastics in all Council run events by <<nominated date>>. Council will ensure that any single-use plastics still in use due to existing contracts or necessity have a defined end date for their use. Council will facilitate the provision of information on sourcing alternatives to events operating, or seeking to operate, within the Council area.

- 2 ban the use of single-use plastics at all events held on Council land, or sponsored by Council by <<nominated date>>. Events held after this date will be required to adhere to a Plastic Free Events Guide as a condition of obtaining a license. The scope, definitions and guideline requirements within the Plastic Free Events Guide will be drafted by Council officers, to be passed at a future meeting of Council.
- 3 require that single-use plastics are replaced with reusable or 100% compostable items, or, if captured in a closed loop system, items eligible under the Container Refund Scheme, and that balloons and polystyrene packaging are not used, sold or distributed.
- 4 undertake an education campaign about the impacts of single-use plastics and the alternatives to these items, with particular emphasis on promoting BYO strategies.
- 5 work to provide information to event organisers on sourcing alternatives to single-use plastics and encourage businesses within the community to adopt these strategies.

Note: It is recommended that Council define their definition of single-use plastics in this context. In some cases there is currently not a viable alternative to the use of a single-use plastic product. The following products are reasonable to include in this definition as they contain readily sourced, viable alternatives; water bottles, food ware (cutlery, cups, plates, bowls), straws, coffee cups/lids, takeaway containers, and plastic bags.

We strongly urge Council to consider banning balloons or including balloons in this definition as well.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources to accompany these guidelines can be found on the Plastic Free Places website.

www.plasticfreeplaces.org

