



Bring your own container campaign

CITY OF WHITTLESEA BYO CONTAINER TOOLKIT

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The City of Whittlesea aims to be a leader in sustainable living. To make this goal a reality we need to reduce single use plastic packaging in food businesses and encourage residents to bring their own reusables (bags, cups and containers) – and that’s where you come in!

Why are we running this program?

Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing environmental issues. Our rapidly increasing production of disposable plastic products overwhelms the world's ability to deal with them. The only real long-term solution is to stop relying on single-use plastic.

We are aiming to reduce the six single use plastic items that are the most problematic and prolific sources of litter. These include:

1. Plastic shopping and produce bags
2. Water bottles
3. Straws
4. Disposable coffee cups
5. Takeaway containers
6. Food ware (cups, plates, cutlery).

How can you get involved?

Complete our online application and survey by clicking on the following link <https://whittleseasurveys.com.au/anon/2036.aspx> to give us an indication on the processes you currently have in place to reduce single use plastic.

Use our poster and decals to encourage customers to bring their own bags and containers and highlight that your business supports residents to bring their own reusables.

See our advice on how to avoid the most problematic single use plastic items then implement the actions that make most sense for your business.

Benefits for your business

We will list your business on our Whittlesea Tourism website as a BYO friendly business and share your efforts and successes via our communication channels (e.g. social media, online and newsletters).

Reduce at least three out of six items and we'll promote your achievements via our communications channels.

Attract new customers who want to support a local business making a difference.
Decrease your packaging costs over time as more customers bring their own bags and containers.

Reducing your carbon footprint, waste to landfill and garbage collection costs. Help keep City of Whittlesea's streets, parks and rivers clean and be a champion for positive change in your community.

Food Health and Safety Facts

There is currently no provision under the Victorian food Act 1984 (Act), the Code or the Primesafe or Dairy Food Safety Victoria Regulations (Regulations) which prohibits stores from accepting reusable customer containers. It is at the discretion of the business owner.

A recent survey of Whittlesea food businesses found that 88 per cent of those surveys would support a 'bring your own container' program in principle.

Organisations like Sustainability Victoria, BYO Containers and Trashless Takeaway and other Councils including City of Yarra and Surf Coast Shire are encouraging businesses to allow customers to BYO bags and containers.

A food business must, when packaging food, ensure there is no likelihood that the food may become contaminated during the packaging process. It is up to each business to determine whether a container provided by the customer can be used.

Considerations include the cleanliness of the re-useable container and the potential for it to contaminate the product or other food or surfaces in the premises. (Please be aware not all sources of contamination are visible).

Our advice is to:

- Not take BYO containers into the kitchen area, food preparation area or resting on food contact surfaces. This includes using BYO containers to store and weigh deli products.
- Serve the food into the container at the front counter – for example, pre made food like sandwiches, bread, sushi, cakes, slices, salads quiche, pies etc.

Educating customers on container hygiene

Whether or not a business accepts customer bags and containers is ultimately an individual management decision. Stores do have the right to refuse containers that they feel are unsuitable.

In a situation where a customer asks you to use a dirty bag or container it's a good opportunity to educate customers on container hygiene. Instead of turning away a potentially loyal customer you can approach it in the following way:

Unfortunately, we can't serve food in that bag or container as it has residue food and might be contaminated. Next time make sure you've washed it in hot soapy water or a dishwasher and stored it with the lid in a dry place.

Does food have to be individually packaged?

A food vendor must ensure that food on display is protected from contamination. This can be achieved in several ways, including, but not limited to:

1. Individually packaging the food.
2. Storing the food in a display cabinet.

Referencing Section 3.2.2 Division 3 (6) of the Code, a food business must, when storing food, store food in such a way that:

- a. It is protected from the likelihood of contamination; and
- b. The environmental conditions under which it's stored won't adversely affect the safety & suitability of the food.

This means that food vendors can find ways to sell their food without pre-packaging it or wrapping it in plastic wrap.

If you're still unsure call our Environmental Health Team on 9217 2170.

How to avoid the six single use plastic packaging items

The aim is to shift your customers from single use plastic to reusable non-plastic alternatives. Where no reusable alternatives are available, we've identified more sustainable packaging products.

If you make any changes, we suggest you hold a staff meeting to ensure all staff know how you want them to avoid single use plastic items.

Plastic shopping bags and produce bags

How to avoid

- Encourage customers to bring their own shopping and produce bags
- Sell reusable shopping and produce bags

Packaging alternative

- 100% paper bags for takeaway

Packaging suppliers

- [Biopak](#) sell paper carry bags that can be re-used up to 7 times
- [Ever Eco](#) sell bulk orders of reusable produce bags

Plastic water bottles

How to avoid

- Sell soft drink in cans
- Sell still and sparkling water packaged in cans or glass bottles
- Provide a jug of tap water so customers can refill their own reusable water bottle.

Packaging suppliers

- [Wallaby Water](#) sell canned still and sparkling water
- [Aqua Botanical](#) is an award- winning water sourced entirely from fruit and veggies and packaged in glass. Order online or call 1300 476 969
- [Splitrock](#) sell water packaged in glass, order online or call 9533 8001

Plastic straws

How to avoid

- Encourage customers to sip from a cup, can or bottle
- Offer reusable stainless-steel straws for eat in
- Store all straws out of sight and only provide when requested

Packaging suppliers

- [Biopak](#) sell paper straws
- [Biome](#) sell stainless steel

Disposal

Paper straws belong in the garbage bin, they cannot be recycled through Council's kerbside recycling service.

Disposable coffee cups

How to avoid

- Offer your customers a proper coffee cup
- For takeaways orders, encourage customers to BYO reusable coffee cup
- Offer a discount to customers who bring a reusable coffee cup
- Sell reusable takeaway coffee cups
- Store disposable coffee cups out of sight and only provide when requested.

Packaging alternative

- [Keep Cup](#)
- [Frank Green](#)

- [Huskee](#)

Disposal

Disposable coffee cups belong in the garbage bin, they cannot be recycled through Council's kerbside recycling service.

Takeaway plastic containers

How to avoid

- Encourage customers to bring their own food container
- Offer a discount for customers who BYO food container
- Introduce a container swap scheme like [Retub](#)

Packaging alternative

- 100% cardboard containers
- 100% paper satchel bags (for chips and smaller items)

Packaging suppliers

- [Detpak](#) unlined food trays Detpak Endura Range, Detpak Clams Range, Detpak Snack Boxes, Detpak Fish and Chip Boxes.
- Closed Loop sell an enviro range of packaging
- [Retub](#) offer a container swap scheme

Food ware (cutlery, plates, cups)

How to avoid

- Encourage customers to sit down and enjoy your food and drinks on reusable plates and cups
- For takeaway orders, encourage customers to bring their own food containers
- Provide cloth napkins
- Store disposable takeaway cutlery or cups out of sight and only provide when requested

Packaging alternative

- Cloth napkins
- 100% bamboo cutlery

Packaging suppliers

- [Biopak](#) or [Detpak](#) for bio bowls, napkins and cutlery

Disposal

Used napkins and cutlery belong in the garbage bin, they cannot be recycled through Council's kerbside recycling service.