

Single Use Plastic Policy

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. Plastic is a lightweight, cheap, and versatile product that is utilised daily across society. However, the impact of plastic litter on the natural environment and its impact to human health is becoming evident. Research is growing on the effect of plastic litter; plastic does not break down but breaks up into microplastics which have the potential to move through the environment and enter the human food chain. As such, the potential impacts from plastic may become more apparent and difficult to manage. The purpose of this Policy is to apply the precautionary principle, such that a lack of full scientific certainty does not postpone Council from implementing measures to prevent environmental degradation and human health consequences.
- 1.2. The purpose of the Single Use Plastic Policy is to progressively phase out single use plastics from Council operations, Council events and events on Council owned and managed land. This Single Use Plastic Policy also enables Council to work towards the outcomes of the NSW Plastics Action Plan: to reduce plastic waste generation, make the most of our plastic resources, reduce plastic leakage and improve our understanding of the future of plastics.

2. Scope

- 2.1. Albury City Council (AlburyCity) and the City of Wodonga (Wodonga Council) are committed to progressively reducing single use plastic. This Policy outlines how the Councils will work together to achieve this commitment within our community. This Policy applies to Council operations and Council-managed or Albury City Council sponsored events including, but not limited to buildings, facilities, official functions, civic events, community forums, listening posts, workshops, meetings, training events and parties. The Policy also incorporates advocating for change and working with the community to build awareness and behavioral change on single use plastic. This Policy outlines how the Councils will lead and work together with our community to achieve this commitment.
- 2.2. Under the Two Cities One Community partnership, this Policy is to formalise Albury and Wodonga City Council's commitment to progressively reduce and where possible eliminate single use plastic where practically possible from within its operations and at civic events, implement responsible procurement practices and influence supply chains, and to improve consumer awareness on single use plastic.
- 2.3. Exemptions apply for plastic products that are required to meet legislation and/or for medical and safety requirements, or where there is no other practical alternative product or distribution method available.
- 2.4. Events and activities occurring on Council land (other than those sponsored by Albury City Council), but not managed by Council, shall be required by Council to voluntarily comply.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Council - Means the local government authority (ie. AlburyCity) with responsibility over that jurisdiction.
- 3.2 Council Managed Land - Land owned by the State (ie. Crown Land) or a third party that Council manages day to day.
- 3.3 Council Officers/Public Officials - Includes Councillors, employees whether they are permanent or temporary employees; volunteers; and contractors.
- 3.4 Council Operations - Anywhere that Council staff are present at a location or provide a service or function to the community, including council buildings and facilities.
- 3.5 Council Owned Land - Land owned by Council.
- 3.6 Council Sponsored - Activities or events that receive financial or in-kind assistance from Albury City Council.
- 3.7 Events and activities - An organised activity requiring an AlburyCity permit to occur on Council owned or managed land.
- 3.8 Plastic - The Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act defines plastic as a material made from or comprising organic polymers from plant extracts or fossil fuels, whether the material is processed, reprocessed, re-used, recycled or recovered.
- 3.9 Single Use Plastic Items - Single use items include but are not limited to stationery, packaging, polystyrene, cleaning items, balloons, straws, cutlery and/or food and drink packaging designed to be used once and then discarded. Council will continue to advocate and support industry but will not prioritise items where there are no viable alternatives.

4. References

- 4.1 Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021
- 4.2 National Packaging Targets 2025
- 4.3 Albury Waste Management Strategy 2020 – 2025
- 4.4 NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014- 2021 (WARR Strategy)
- 4.5 Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014
- 4.6 Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation Waste Strategy 2017 – 2021
- 4.7 Social and Sustainability Procurement Policy

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5. Content

5.1 Background

Under the Two Cities One Community Action Plan 2017 – 2021, item 2.1.2, AlburyCity and Wodonga Council committed to continuing to collaborate on Waste Management and the Halve Waste Program marketing and education. Both Councils continue to work towards reducing single use plastic.

AlburyCity and Wodonga Council will have similar policies and documents associated with single use plastic, based on each Council's relevant state legislation.

To achieve our commitment to reduce single use plastic, AlburyCity will work to:

- 5.1.1 eliminate single use plastic by 2030, where supported by Federal and State Government and industry;
- 5.1.2 progressively reduce and eliminate single use plastic items from AlburyCity Council operations and sponsored events;
- 5.1.3 progressively reduce and eliminate single use plastic at events and activities;
- 5.1.4 comply with all National and State legislation in relation to the circular economy, single use plastic and waste avoidance, generation, recycling and disposal;
- 5.1.5 advocate all levels of government regarding reductions in the use of single use plastic;
- 5.1.6 implement procurement practices and influence supply chains to avoid plastic packaging wherever possible;
- 5.1.7 influence the local business and retail industry sectors to provide products and services that do not rely on single use plastic;
- 5.1.8 build awareness within the community and Council on the importance of reducing single use plastic;
- 5.1.9 focus on alternatives to balloons and their release;
- 5.1.10 support the National Packaging Targets;
- 5.1.11 develop and implement an Action Plan to progressively reduce single use plastic;
- 5.1.12 advocate and support industry, including expansion of the soft plastic recycling industry;
- 5.1.13 report to the community against the outcomes of the Single Use Plastic Policy and Action Plan; and
- 5.1.14 align with state legislation to provide customers single-use plastic straws (out of sight) per legislative exemptions.

5.2 Exemptions will apply for plastic products:

- 5.2.1 that are required to meet legislative, medical or safety requirements; or
- 5.2.2 that follow the Waste Hierarchy, single use plastic that can be recycled will be preferred to waste that can only be disposed; or

5.2.3 where there is no other practical alternative product or distribution method is available.

6. Documentation

- 6.1 **Single Use Plastic Action Plan (DOC22/155528); this plan identifies actions AlburyCity will implement to progressively phase out single use plastic.** Implementation of this Policy and Action Plan will be reported through AlburyCity's Annual Report.

7. Authorisation

Owner	Directorate	Infrastructure, Planning and Environment
	Responsible Officer	Energy and Sustainability Officer
Authorisation	Draft	
Review Date	2027	
Register	This policy is included in the Public Policy Register.	
Record of Amendments	May 2023	Updated Purpose and Scope; Definition of plastic aligns with new NSW legislation; Updated definitions; Council will advocate and support industry, including expanding the soft plastic recycling industry; Included statement on focusing on balloon alternatives; Set target to be single use plastic free by 2030.

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