

4.4 UPDATE ON REDUCING USE OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS ACROSS COUNCIL BUSINESS

Director: Ossie Martinz

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the progress of the program to reduce single use plastics across the Council business and events over the last six months.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the implementation of the actions and commitments agreed upon, regarding the reduction of single use plastics across Council business at the December 2017 Council meeting.

BACKGROUND

At the May 2017 Council meeting, a resolution was passed to commit Council to actively work toward the elimination of plastic bags and other single use items across Council business including events. This resolution was led by a motion tabled by Councillor Josh Fergeus. (See Appendix 1)

This motion sought to reinforce Council's commitment to waste and litter reduction by advocating for a state-wide ban on single use plastic bags, and the development of a policy and updated stallholder guidelines, aimed at reducing or eliminating the impact of single use plastics.

In order to determine Council's current use of plastics, a survey was completed across Council businesses to understand how this material is used and to identify realistic approaches to reducing its use. This paper provides a summary of the findings from the survey and suggested actions.

Sustainable Monash has been charged with the responsibility of assessing the usage of single use plastic items throughout Council, to understand the incidence, the purpose or use and to investigate how they may be minimised or avoided. The project team provided a report of the results to Council at the December meeting. A response was also provided in reference to the Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Plastic Bags, Packaging and Microbeads) Bill 2016.

The review of single use plastics across Council business identified 10 key materials:

The review of single use plastics across Council business identified 10 key plastic types:

#	Plastic type	Details
1	Publication packaging	As a result of subscriptions and external printers (infrequent)
2	Stationery product packaging	paper reams covers, post it notes, pockets, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), toner cartridge packaging, etc.

3	Plastic bottle packaging	Milk supply at council venues, water bottles at events, Juice for children at Child care, etc
4	External catering packaging	Meals on Wheels food containers (50-60,000 per annum – have tested reusable packaging/ use recyclable), food packaging.
5	Internal/External Catering	Glad wrap on food trays for internal events; bottles and containers as a result of cafés at the three recreation centres and Monash Art Gallery
6	Events	Plastic packaging and containers supplied by vendors, windmills, sponsor bags, temporary signage
7	Electrical and other plastic off cuts	Electrical work as part of maintenance activities.
8	Plastic bags	Used for incidental shopping and delivering wet clothes to parents; bin liners; litter pick up, and rubbish removal.
9	Specialised single use items	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – gloves and booties; food sample bags and containers for testing; nappies; anti-tamper tape; safety and dumped rubbish tape; sharps containers; and dog waste bags (biodegradable).
10	Transport and product packaging	Most items ordered and delivered to store are wrapped in film plastic on a pallet. This includes bins, appliances, building and horticultural products.

Out of the 10 key materials, seven relate to plastic packaging which do not incur a direct cost to council.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A Business case was prepared to articulate and support the implementation of the single use plastics reduction program (Attachment 1). This was endorsed and was provided \$14,000 in funding to support delivery of program initiatives from July 2018.

Following the Council commitment at the December meeting, and the implementation plan in the business case, a number of actions have taken place:

1) Baseline data- Waste Audit

A corporate waste audit was completed to identify the amount of soft plastics which approximately 11% by weight for the major corporate buildings.

2) Policy, Contracts and Guidelines review and development to address single use plastic packaging may be through purchasing contracts such as catering and capital works

- a) Feedback was provided to the recent review of Council's procurement policy to strengthen the importance of sustainable procurement including a commitment to reduce packaging.
- b) Input was provided to the Information and Arts team on the stall holders guidelines for events to actively reduce plastic packaging and giveaways.

3) Internal Operations engagement and education to support reduction of single use plastics

- a) Conducted staff activities to improve whole of council awareness on Council's commitment to eliminate single-use plastic materials. The first was a discounted

keep cup program and giveaways, lunch time movie screening of 'Bay Keepers', hints and tips for reducing plastic, and provision of reusable bags.

4) External Engagement and Advocacy

- a) Provided input regarding plastic packaging into the new lease agreement and tender documents for the cafe's at the three recreation centres in Glen Waverley, Oakleigh and Clayton and the cafe at the Monash Art Gallery.
- b) Council advocated to State Government for a state wide ban on single use plastic bags.

5) Diversion from landfill

- a) Purchased a compacting bin to collect plastic film waste generated which was unable to be avoided at the store.
- b) Investigating what is required to facilitate the increase Council's purchase of recycled plastic products.

While Council's implementation program focusses on single-use plastics generated by Council business and events, other activities have occurred to reduce single use plastics entering the environment, which support the broader community:

- ABC's War on Waste program generated significant awareness in the community about the issue of single use plastic waste.
- State Governments commitment to ban single use plastic bags by June 2019
- Both Woolworths and Coles are no longer providing these bags in their stores.

To support this, the Sustainable Monash team will continue to run a number of community workshops on zero waste living and recycling.

FINANCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Plastic bags are the fifth most littered item in Victoria. The average plastic bag is used for just 12 minutes, yet may last in our ecosystems for around 1000 years. Eliminating or discouraging single use plastics will reduce widespread environmental impacts.

Eliminating or reducing single use plastic at events may result in minor additional expense to event stallholders, but would potentially result in savings to Council in managing waste and litter on site and in the community.

Current activities completed have mainly incurred staff time and under \$10,000 in financial costs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Avoiding the use of single use plastics within council business, at events and in the community will help deliver on the objectives of the 2017-2021 Council Plan, particularly Inviting Open and Urban Spaces, and A Liveable and Sustainable City.

This initiative addresses key actions in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-26.

Priority 4	Waste and Resource Management
4.2.2	Build the understanding of staff and cleaners about the impact of waste generation and improve recycling
4.2.4	Improve staff understanding of their procurement responsibilities.
4.3.2	Educate and support community to implement correct waste disposal and improve recovery practices including reducing consumption of resources
4.3.3	Advocate for reduce product packaging, improve resource recovery and improve litter management

Monash Waste Strategy identifies that Council is committed to reducing it's own waste and increase recycling efforts to play a leadership role for the community.

CONCLUSION

Monash City Council is actively committed to reducing impacts arising from waste and litter. This update highlights to council the activities completed to date and the progress for Council in reducing the use of single use plastics and miminising the amount ending up in landfill or our environment.

The majority of single use plastics in Council relates to transport and product packaging which is not seen by the public. Development and implementation of policies aimed at reducing or eliminating the use of single use plastic across Council business, and at coordinated and delivered events demonstrates leadership and clearly communicates Council's commitment to waste and litter avoidance.

Sustainable Monash will provide the next update in June 2019