

## 4.1 SECOND UPDATE ON REDUCING USE OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS ACROSS COUNCIL BUSINESS

Director: Ossie Martinz

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council notes the progress to reduce single use plastics across the Council business and events over the last twelve months.*

### **PURPOSE**

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

### **INTRODUCTION**

At the May 2017 Council meeting, a resolution was passed to commit Council to actively work towards the reduction 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.

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 to State Government, and the development of policies and updated stallholder guidelines, aimed at reducing or eliminating the impact of single use plastics.

In December 2017, Monash committed to reducing single use plastics in council businesses and events and in July 2018 the first update was provided.

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 over the last 12 months.

### **BACKGROUND**

Sustainable Monash have 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 2017 and the July 2018 meetings.

The key source of single use plastics across Council business include:

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

#	Plastic type	Details
1	<b>Publication packaging</b>	As a result of subscriptions and external printers (infrequent)
2	<b>Stationery product packaging</b>	paper reams covers, post it notes, pockets, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), toner cartridge packaging, etc.
3	<b>Plastic bottle packaging</b>	Milk supply at council venues, water bottles at events, Juice for children at Child care, etc
4	<b>External catering packaging</b>	Meals on Wheels food containers (50-60,000 per annum – have tested reusable packaging/ use recyclable), food packaging.
5	<b>Internal/External Catering</b>	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	<b>Events</b>	Plastic packaging and containers supplied by vendors, windmills, sponsor bags, temporary signage
7	<b>Electrical and other plastic off cuts</b>	Electrical work as part of maintenance activities.
8	<b>Plastic bags</b>	Used for incidental shopping and delivering wet clothes to parents; bin liners; litter pick up, and rubbish removal.
9	<b>Specialised single use items</b>	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	<b>Transport and product packaging</b>	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, and an incidental result of purchasing something else.

A corporate waste audit showed that soft plastics equates to 11% by weight in the major corporate buildings waste.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

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

Reducing single use plastics at Monash but it is long and challenging process. Hopefully Monash can become a role model for our community in addressing this challenge.

Following the Council commitment at the December meeting, and the implementation plan in the business case since June 2018, a number of actions have taken place:

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

Continuing to provide feedback on Policy, Contracts and Guidelines to address single use plastic packaging may be through purchasing contracts such as catering and capital works and the procurement policy.

## **2) Internal Operations engagement and education to support reduction of single use plastics**

- a) Business cases for use of recycled materials including recycled plastics and Lifecycle thinking in procurement have been developed for internal teams.
- b) Active Monash have taken the initiative to remove all disposable cutlery, plates and cups from their centre staff rooms and the cafés said they won't be replacing plastic straws once the run out.
- c) Reusable cups and glasses are available in Civic Centre meeting rooms.
- d) The Sustainability team has been trialling reusable containers with our caterer and they seem to be working. Reusable cups for external events are also available to staff.
- e) The horticulture team is looking to purchase future fertiliser in reusable bulker bags, instead of 30kg bags.
- f) Monash events already ban use of balloons and straws.

## **3) External Engagement and Advocacy**

- a) Worked with Monash Universities Precious Plastics team and 10 schools to collect and create signs made out of recycled plastic (collected by students) using open source technology.
- b) While Council's implementation program focusses on single-use plastics generated by Council business and events. Sustainable Monash team also ran a number of community workshops on zero waste living, recycling and decluttering your home.
- c) Provided a screening of 'Rubber Jelly Fish' at the MGA creating awareness of the impact of plastic and balloons has on our environment for over 80 attendees.
- d) Installed recycling bins into MARC and the Monash Libraries to improve the recovery of recyclables including single plastic.
- e) Council advocated to State Government for a state wide ban on single use plastic bags.

## **4) Diversion from landfill**

- a) A Big Belly Solar Compacting bin was installed at the store to collect plastic film waste generated from deliveries. This bin is a user friendly baler for soft plastics. The bin is being used well by the store staff but may not have the capacity they require. It is also difficult to find a recycler for film plastic, so it is better to try and avoid where possible.
- b) Engaged with Urban design and capital works to investigate the increase of Council's purchase of recycled plastic products. A presentation was also held for Engineers to

understand what is available and now a trial is being considered for furniture and road works. Since then a number of capital projects are trialling Reconophalt, an asphalt product containing a high level of recycled content materials including plastic bags and glass. A decking materials containing 73% recycled plastic has also been used for three projects.

### **Next steps**

The sustainability team will continue to work across council to continue to reduce single use plastics , and also actively source recycled content products. Through the work to date, it is evident that many Monash staff and teams are interested and passionate about the environment . There is also an opportunity to develop guidelines for event friendly packaging for event holders and support sporting clubs to reduce plastic use. Working directly with some of Councils key contract suppliers for stationary and outdoor equipment will be considered.

The introduction of food organics in the green bin in 2020, will provide options to make compostable containers and cutlery more viable.

### ***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.

There are limited direct financial benefits for suppliers to remove at present. However there is good support in our community and across council, as we are aware of the secondary impacts of their use. .

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

Most works going forward will involve staff time and will cost less than \$10,000 .

### ***POLICY IMPACTS***

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 staff continue to look for opportunities to reducing impacts arising from waste and litter.

This update highlights to council the activities completed over the last 12 months and the progress for Council in reducing the use of single use plastics and minimising the amount ending up in landfill or our environment. There are still a number of challenges to come but Monash is keen to be a role model for our community.

Sustainable Monash will provide the next update in July 2020.