

Historic day for single-use plastic bans

Friday, 1 July 2022

Ban of nine single-use plastic items ramps up from today
Supplier and retailer support program reaches more than 10,000 businesses
An education-first approach for retailers

It's a historic day in Western Australia with of bans on nine single-use plastic items coming into effect.

The items include plates, bowls, cutlery, drink stirrers, drinking straws, thick plastic bags, expanded polystyrene (EPS) food containers, helium balloon releases and unlidded containers.

Disposable plastic cups for cold drinks will be banned from October 2022, providing more time for retailers to adapt.

Western Australia leads the way as the first Australian jurisdiction to ban thick plastics bags, unlidded containers and disposable cups for cold drinks.

The bans, the first stage of Western Australia's Plan for Plastics, were introduced on January 1, 2022 but a six-month transition period has allowed businesses to access support to help them transition to single-use plastic alternatives.

The State Government will use a common-sense, education-first approach with retailers.

Since January, the Government has funded a retailer and supplier engagement program, implemented by the National Retail Association (NRA), to provide assistance to more than 10,000 retailers, food outlets, suppliers, community organisations and shopping centres.

Over the past four months, NRA liaison officers have visited over 300 shopping precincts and spoken to more than 4,000 retailers in their stores to supply information materials, provide advice and answer questions about the regulations. They have also held 20 online information sessions and responded to more than 400 queries via a toll-free hotline and email.

More than 150 suppliers have been contacted to ensure their responsibilities under the ban are clear.

Additionally, the Plastic Free places program, run in partnership with the Boomerang Alliance, has also been on the ground providing individualised support and solutions for cafes, event hosts, markets and other hospitality.

Business requiring support to make the transition to plastic-free alternatives can visit www.plasticsbanwa.com.au, call the tollfree WA hotline 1800 817 723, or email plastic-action@dwer.wa.gov.au.

For more information on Western Australia's Plan for Plastics visit WA.gov.au

Comments attributed to Environment Minister Reece Whitby:

"Western Australians overwhelmingly support action on single-use plastic and today the ban on the supply of many single-use plastics commences. We can be proud that our State continues to lead the way in reducing its harmful effects on the environment.

"An extensive engagement program over the past six months has assisted more than 10,000 businesses to adjust to the new requirements, with a significant number already doing the right thing.

"The State Government recognises that enforcement of these bans are coming into effect during a time when businesses are dealing with the economic impact of COVID-19 and disrupted supply chains - and we will take a common-sense approach to enforcement.

"I encourage shoppers to do their part by using their own sustainable products instead of disposable items from a retailer, and show their understanding that, when buying groceries or takeaway food, some items will no longer be available."

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