

# » reusable containers and your business



**Meeting health and safety requirements when customers bring their own reusable containers and cups**

## » Why accept reusable cups and containers?

- Reduce packaging waste
- Send less waste to landfill (coffee cups cannot be recycled)
- Reduce litter in the community
- Support sustainable living

## » Can we accept a customer's container?

Yes, the legislation under the *Food Act 2003* (NSW) or the *Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code* does not prohibit the use of reusable cups and containers.

The purpose of the Act is to ensure food for sale is both safe and suitable for human consumption.

## » Can leftovers be placed in a customer's container?

Yes, the Act or Code does not prevent a business from accepting a customer's container for their leftovers.

## » Can my business decline reusable cups and containers?

It is up to the business whether you accept containers brought in by customers or not. It is a business decision rather than a constraint due to legislation.

## » What about hygiene?

Under the *Food Standards Code*, businesses are directed to only use packaging material which is 'fit for its intended use' and is unlikely to cause contamination during or after the packaging process.

Council does not recommend to accept non-food containers (for example, chemical storage containers) for food or drink purposes.

## » How can I support reusable cups and containers?

Place a reminder sign to ensure customer's containers are clean, in good condition and of food-grade material.

Offer a discount (e.g. 50 cents) for customers who bring reusable items for their takeaway food or drink purchases.



**If you have any questions or concerns please contact:**

**Ballina Shire Council Customer Service Centre, ph 1300 864 444  
e [council@ballina.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@ballina.nsw.gov.au) w [ballina.nsw.gov.au](http://ballina.nsw.gov.au)**



## » Tips to reduce single use plastic items for food retailers

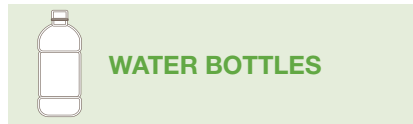
Here are some examples of ways to reduce single use items in your workplace.

- Clearly mark landfill, recycling, and compost bins with what belongs in each
- Always ask whether a customer is eating in or taking away so that single-use items aren't used unnecessarily
- Use an organics bin service if available



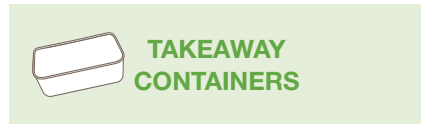
### COFFEE

- provide a discount to customers with their own reusable cup
- sell reusable cups
- offer a borrow ware or swap cup system



### WATER BOTTLES

- provide table water in glasses or a free refill station
- for takeaway options, stock reusable bottles for sale



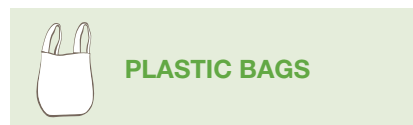
### TAKEAWAY CONTAINERS

- provide or sell reusable containers
- offer a discount on next purchase where containers are returned



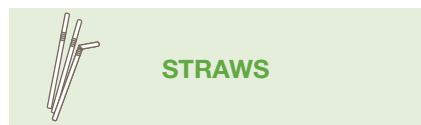
### FOODWARE

- use washable reusable items such as stainless steel cutlery and ceramic plates
- ask takeaway customers if they need cutlery rather than automatically providing single use items



### PLASTIC BAGS

- sell branded reusable cloth bags or stock Boomerang Bags
- offer a borrow and return reusable bag service
- provide paper bags and recycled cardboard boxes for larger orders



### STRAWS

- only provide straws when requested
- provide or sell stainless steel straws
- switch to paper straws (if straws are unavoidable)

## » Seek support and promote sustainable activities

There are a range of organisations that can support your business to improve and promote your efforts towards sustainability:

### CIRCULAR CAFES

Ballina Shire Council is a member organisation of North East Waste who run Waste Warriors, a free waste reduction service for Northern Rivers businesses. Register for your **FREE** waste assessment for tailored assistance to reduce your waste and recycle more, as well as up to date options on best practice packaging. Find more information and uncover inspiring business case studies

[circularcafes.com.au](http://circularcafes.com.au)

### RESPONSIBLE CAFES

a not-for-profit initiative that celebrates and promotes a network of cafes that champion reusable cups. Register your cafe to be placed on their map and download free resources at

[responsiblecafes.org](http://responsiblecafes.org)

### BYO CONTAINERS

a self-funded project that encourages the use of BYO containers for takeaway food through a directory of supportive cafes and restaurants. Add your business to their directory at

[byocontainers.org](http://byocontainers.org)

### PLASTIC FREE JULY

every year, over 3 million people across the globe participate in the Plastic Free July challenge to dramatically reduce plastic use. Show your support and download editable resources at

[plasticfreejuly.org](http://plasticfreejuly.org)

### STRAW NO MORE

a not for profit initiative which implores individuals, businesses and schools to take a pledge to phase out using plastic straws. For more information and free downloadable resources, head to

[strawnomore.org](http://strawnomore.org)