



# Mine site reusable crib kits Communication tips

## Waste avoidance: Reducing single-use plastics on mine sites

**Reusable food containers and crib kits are being effectively used on mine sites and in accommodation villages in Western Australia. Crib kits can be easily implemented in closed-loop environments and, on some sites, they have been standard for decades.**

**Reusable containers reduce reliance on single-use packaging, whether plastic or paper based. They also prevent large volumes of disposable containers being sent to landfill. This is a positive outcome for the environment, sustainability goals and ESG targets.**



Reusable crib kits not only reduce waste and environmental impacts, they can also cut costs for mining and catering companies by eliminating recurring expenditure on disposable items. The costs of disposable food containers and cups add up across three meals a day. The cost of disposables is passed on by caterers to mining companies or contractors, built into quotes and invoices. A basic but functional crib kit, with an insulated crib bag, three containers and cutlery set, can be purchased for less than \$50. Costs can reduce by about 20 per cent when kits are purchased in greater quantities.

**Examples from WA mine sites show the cost of reusable crib kits can be recovered in three to eight months due to savings on no-longer-needed disposable containers. Savings of tens of thousands of dollars per month can be made. Even higher when the reduction in waste management and landfill cost is factored in. Over time, this is a significant business cost saving, an environmental win and a move towards a circular economy.**

Reusable crib kits (lunchboxes, coffee mugs, water bottles, bags) can last for many years. While there is an upfront cost to companies who supply kits to new starters, this is an infrequent cost that pays off in savings on disposable packaging supplies. Companies can also sell kits to personnel or ask them to bring their own – both options result in expenditure savings and have successful outcomes.

## Communication tips

Ideally, the earlier companies tell people about the transition to reusable crib kits, the better. Before the switch to reusable crib kits, develop a well-planned communication campaign with three to six months' lead time and multiple touch points, channels and dates. Several mine sites have, however, successfully made the switch with limited time and no communications plan or promotions, instead relying on signage in crib rooms and email to advise of the change to reusable crib kits.

Keep communications simple and clearly explain expectations and responsibilities for reusable crib kits. Ensure permanent residents, personnel, casuals and contractors know what rules apply to them if the management of reusable kits is different depending on employment status. Plan the roll out of kits and the teams responsible for their assembly and distribution. Kits are generally collected before and after shifts. If kits are supplied once a year to permanent staff, as done on some WA mine sites, ensure the collection is noted in the employment profile and that it is understood via a communications plan.

## Key information to convey:

- What's happening and why
- What residents, personnel, casuals, contractors need to do
- How the new system operates (bring your own kits or supplied, distribution method, container washing, wash stations)
- Responsibilities (remember crib kit, wash containers, hang crib bags outside, take containers out of bag before refrigeration)
- Costs if applicable (including replacement costs, for sale on site or not)
- Start date.

## Communication methods:

- Emails
- Posters/flyers in dining halls or dry mess and wet mess areas, gym and communal areas, crib rooms
- Site notices
- Village information booklets
- Return to work and pre-start slides
- Digital screens
- Intranet
- Daily start-up meetings
- Photos of kits.



Sample of a communications poster: Courtesy Mineral Resources

## Additional change management education:

- Brochures to accompany kits
- Training and awareness campaigns
- Briefings at company meetings
- Briefing notes for staff involved in kit roll out, to generate and enhance buy-in
- QR codes linked to campaign resources
- Food safety information.

All change communications will depend on the size of the site, operational processes and whether catering and facilities management is run in-house by the mining company or by an external contractor, caterer, accommodation and facilities management company. Those responsible for quoting, ordering and buying the kits are also a factor in how communications develop.

Several mine sites have retained limited supplies of single-use containers after their roll out of reusable crib kits to cover forgetfulness or for visitors during a two-week soft launch. Other sites retain some single-use containers for emergency events including weather incidents such as cyclones or floods and periodical maintenance shutdowns, which are often conducted by contractors.

Reusable crib kits are accepted and effectively managed in the mining and resources sector and are a practical way to reduce waste from single-use food containers and cut operational costs. Some sites have shared a belief that policy changes should take into consideration potential impacts on personal rest time while on site and flow-on effects to staff morale. Other stakeholders have said people washing their own containers promotes personal responsibility and sustainability awareness, reduces operational cost and encourages staff in waste reduction efforts. Competitions and sustainability awards to encourage engagement and positive behaviour change towards reusable crib kits are under consideration at some locations.

While people can be resistant to change, the majority will, and have, supported the move to reusable crib kits on WA mine sites. This is especially true where it is supported and modelled by company leaders to become normal. A free, company-supplied, high-quality, branded crib kit has been found beneficial to buy-in.

Sharing the 'why' can help spark enthusiasm and acceptance. In communication channels, talk about the waste eliminated, the environmental wins and the cost savings. It's also a more enjoyable eating experience than using disposable cutlery and containers.

Reusable crib kits are good news that can be shared as part of ESG and sustainability storytelling, both internally and externally. These stories can be showcased in social and traditional media and annual reporting. Including a human face and personal perspective through photos, videos and quotes can help to engage people in celebrating the environmental achievement.

For more information on rolling out reusables in mining villages, visit the WA Government's Plan for Plastics webpage on the project [Reusable solutions for mine site catering](#) | Western Australian Government.