

Western Australia's

# Plan for Plastics

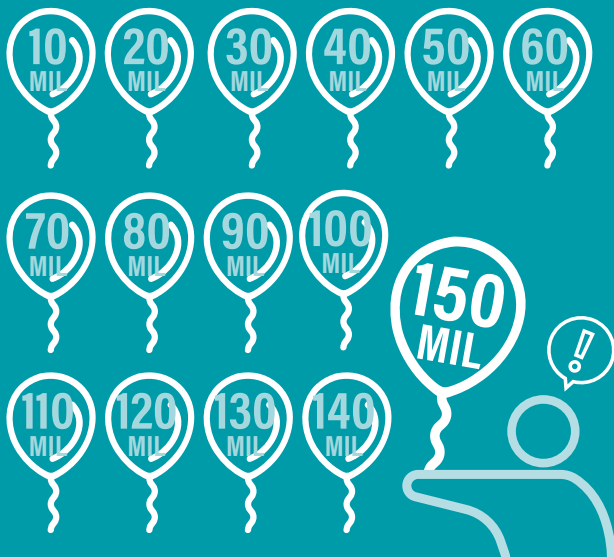
## Single-use plastics ban Balloon releases

January 2022

From 1 January 2022, regulations to ban balloon releases in Western Australia come into effect.

Businesses, organisations and consumers who release balloons are being supported to switch to alternatives.

Western Australians use about 150 MILLION balloons each year



### ► What is being banned?

The ban applies to the release of balloons inflated with a gas that causes it to rise in the air, for example helium.

Under new laws, a person must not cause, or permit to release, a balloon that is inflated with a gas that causes it to rise in the air. Where a gas-filled balloon is released into the air by a child, the supervising adult will be held responsible for the release.

The ban applies to all balloons made of any combination of plastic or metal foil, or made from 'compostable', 'biodegradable' and 'degradable' plastics.

### ► Why are balloon releases banned?

When released into the air, balloons can travel up to 500 km from the release site before deflating and coming back to earth. They eventually become litter, are ingested by wildlife or break down into microplastics that contribute to the pollution of our land and waterways.

Balloons are a particular concern for marine animals. Deflated or burst balloons float and resemble marine animals preferred as a food source for marine turtles, birds, large fish and penguins, and their ingestion often leads to death.

The plastic ribbons attached to the balloons can also become entangled around marine and land animals, restricting movement or the ability to eat.



## ► What is **not** included in the ban?

The ban on balloon releases does not restrict the sale, supply and use of balloons.

Balloon releases that are not included in the ban include:

- balloons required for scientific studies (e.g. meteorological balloons)
- balloons released inside a building or structure, if the balloon does not make its way into the open air
- hot air balloons designed to carry people, that will be recovered after landing.

## ► Who does the ban apply to?

The ban applies to all individuals in Western Australia.

## ► What can I use instead?

There are many alternatives to balloons that are better for the environment and prevent waste going to landfill. Choose to:

- Refuse – Say ‘No’ to helium and air-filled balloons
- Reuse – instead of balloons, opt for cost-effective and reusable party and event decorations, such as:
  - fabric items: bunting, streamers, kites, garlands, curtains/backdrops, wool pompoms
  - flowers and foliage: palm fronds, plant foliage, plants in bright pots, flowers in vases
  - paper items: bunting, paper lanterns, paper streamers, kites, pinwheels
  - wooden items: letters, crates, figures
  - reusable displays: chalkboards/whiteboards



Single-use plastics ban – Balloon releases



- Switch – if you are planning an event and would like to do a release, consider:
  - bubbles
  - floating flower releases
  - seedball releases (using native, local seeds)
  - kite displays
  - confetti toss made with natural materials such as leaves or flower petals
  - tree planting.

Balloons can continue to be used under the bans but take care to avoid their release into the air.

Businesses and organisations that routinely sell or supply helium balloons are encouraged to inform customers that the release of a helium balloon outdoors is banned from **1 January 2022**.

## ► When do penalties apply?

From **1 July 2022** penalties under the Environmental Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulations 2018 apply to individuals for the release of a balloon inflated with gas that causes it to rise in the air.

Penalties apply to an adult if a child in their care releases a balloon inflated with gas that causes it to rise into the air.

## ► Need more information?

Call the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation: 08 6364 7000

Email:

[plastic-action@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:plastic-action@dwer.wa.gov.au)

Check out the website:  
[Western Australia's Plan for Plastics | Western Australian Government](#)  
([www.wa.gov.au](http://www.wa.gov.au))

