

Western Australia's

# Plan for Plastics

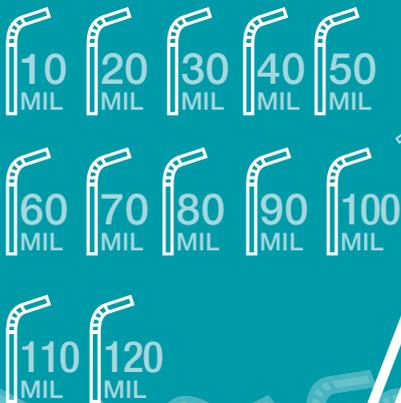
## Single-use plastics ban Plastic drinking straws

January 2022

From 1 January 2022, regulations to ban the sale, supply and distribution of single-use plastic drinking straws in Western Australia come into effect.

Businesses, organisations and consumers who use these items are being supported to switch to reusable and non-plastic alternatives.

In the 2019–20 financial year, Western Australians used an estimated 132.5 MILLION drinking straws.



Quick fact

### ► What is being banned?

The ban applies to the sale, supply or distribution of single-use plastic drinking straws. This includes all sizes and shapes, such as: conventional plastic straws used for beverages, straws with a scoop, flexible straws and bubble tea straws, and straws made with plastic coatings, glues and bindings. Exemptions will apply for people who require plastic straws for a medical, disability or therapeutic purpose.

Plastic straws made from compostable, biodegradable and degradable plastics are also included in the ban.

### ► Why are plastic drinking straws being banned?

About 40 per cent of all plastics used are 'single-use', designed to be used only once or a few times before being thrown away (disposed of). While recyclable, only 11 per cent of single-use plastics are currently recycled, with the majority ending up as litter or in landfills.

In the environment plastic waste breaks down into smaller fragments over a long period of time, if at all. Plastic waste poses a major threat to the health of marine, freshwater and land ecosystems, and impacts the amenity of our environment and coastlines. The impact and abundance of single-use disposable plastic items is significant, and immediate action is required to reduce these impacts.





## ► Who does the ban apply to?

The ban applies to packs of disposable straws sold by retailers, and individual straws supplied or sold by hospitality businesses and other organisations (with exceptions as provided).

## ► If you need a plastic straw

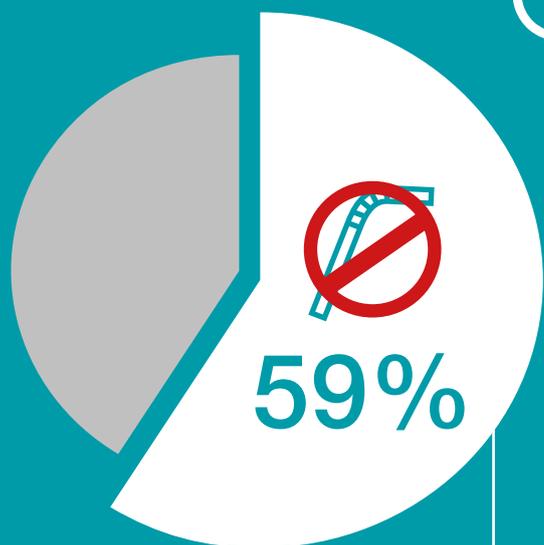
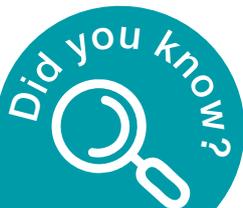
We acknowledge that some people require a drinking straw to meet their individual life needs (because of a disability, medical or therapeutic reason). The plan provides a balance between reducing general consumption of plastic straws via a ban, and maintaining appropriate access to plastic straws for people who require them. The following approach was developed in consultation with the [Single-Use Plastic Working Group](#) which has broad representation from the



following sectors: health (including Aboriginal health), disability, aged care, carer, medical practitioners, pharmacies, retail, hospitality, catering, packaging, environment, local and state government:

- Individual plastic straws can be provided on request at a venue serving food or drink (e.g. cafes, restaurants, bars, takeaway food stores or schools); however, the venue is not mandated to supply a straw. Plastic straws must be out of sight and a person requesting a straw is not required to provide evidence of a need.
- Packs of plastic straws will be available from authorised businesses and organisations including: pharmacies, medical and dental care places, local government customer service centres, charities, nursing homes, aged care homes, palliative, respite and rehabilitation service locations. These places are not mandated to stock packs of straws and will have the straws out of general view. Again, no evidence of a need is required to purchase these products for personal use.
- Wholesalers of plastic straws can continue to provide to the places exempt above.

If you require a plastic straw you can choose to access straws as above, or you may choose to purchase directly from a supplier or online store and bring with you.



59 per cent of people surveyed already choose to refuse single-use plastic straws.



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

The supply of plastic straws for people who require them for a medical, disability or therapeutic purpose.

Plastic straws incorporated into or attached to the packaging of another product (such as juice boxes) will not be included in the ban.

Heavier-weight plastic straws that are designed for ongoing use and sold as individual items or sets by retailers are not included in the ban (e.g. thick plastic novelty straws).

### ► Can I still use disposable plastic straws I have at home?

Yes, you can. The ban does not apply to the personal use of the items, only the sale, supply and distribution of them.

### ► What can I use instead?

There are many options to choose from that are both better for the environment and prevent waste going to landfill. Choose to:

- Refuse – say ‘No’ to drinking straws
- Reuse – opt for reusable drinking straws made from stainless steel, glass, bamboo, steel, silicone and heavier reusable plastics.



Single-use plastics ban – Plastic drinking straws



If you simply can't refuse and reusable options are not available, then consider disposable drinking straws made from non-plastic materials such as paper, wheat, pasta or bamboo. Also look for products that are certified as compostable to Australian Standard 4736-2006 or 5810-2010.

### ► When do penalties apply?

From **1 July 2022** penalties apply for the sale, supply or distribution of drinking straws that are banned under the Environmental Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulations 2018.

Penalties also apply to any person who supplies or manufactures drinking straws and knowingly provides false or misleading information about its composition or whether or not it is a banned plastic drinking straw.

### ► 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](https://www.wa.gov.au/government/policies/water-and-environmental-regulation/western-australia-s-plan-for-plastics) ([www.wa.gov.au](http://www.wa.gov.au))

