

Resolution of Council

23 February 2026

Item 12.3

Act Now - Accelerate Plastic Phase Out

Moved by Councillor Worling, seconded by Councillor Miller –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) according to Clean Up Australia, 60% of all litter comes from plastic packaging, the largest component of litter in NSW. Plastic also accounts for up to 80% of litter in our waterways;
- (ii) each Australian state has its own rules for phasing out plastics. For example, in the Northern Territory, plastic straws and utensils are still made available, while South Australia banned soy sauce fish containers on 1 September 2025;
- (iii) the NSW Government's first plastic plan was implemented on 1 June 2022 and banned lightweight plastic shopping bags. On 1 November 2022 plastic straws, cutlery and certain food service products were banned;
- (iv) in November 2025, the NSW Government launched their Plastics Plan 2.0 which aims to reduce plastic litter in our environment and reduce all litter items by 60% by 2030:
 - (a) the plan proposes reducing plastic waste and scaling up reusable alternatives for unnecessary and harmful plastics from 2026-2030;
 - (b) however, under the plan, the government will not start phasing out fruit and vegetable stickers, soy sauce fish, single use sauce squeeze packs or implement a product stewardship scheme for plastic takeaway cups and food containers until 2030; and
 - (c) delaying action until 2030 means 5 more years of plastic pollution, microplastics entering food chains, and landfill pressure; and

- (v) the City's Waste Reduction and Circular Materials Strategy 2026-2035 supports the NSW plastic bans by encouraging the use of sustainable, reusable alternatives to replace the banned plastic items. The City promoted a toolkit on eliminating single-use items and guidelines on reducing event waste for business owners and created online articles and ads about the banned items for residents;
- (B) Council further note that:
- (i) the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation set out a National Plastics Plan in 2018 which was endorsed by the Federal and all Australian State and Territory Governments. Aimed at phasing-out problematic and unnecessary single-use plastics packaging, with targets including 100% reusable, recyclable, or compostable packaging. To date, only 40% of targets for phasing out problematic and unnecessary single use plastic packaging achieved nationally and progress remains slow;
 - (ii) the Australian Packaging Covenant focused on ensuring plastic packaging was recyclable. The collapse of RedCycle meant that tonnes of "recyclable" soft plastic was being stored in warehouses. The Covenant did not include enough focus on reducing the amount of unnecessary plastic packaging in the first place;
 - (iii) supermarkets have a real opportunity to reduce unnecessary plastics, particularly packaging for fresh fruit and vegetables, which seem to prioritise bulk goods packaged in plastic with bar codes for easy self-scanning; and
 - (iv) supermarkets must demonstrate leadership by accelerating their transition to a plastic-free model. By investing in new technology and adopting sustainable plastic free alternatives, supermarkets can reduce the amount of plastic produced and consumers are forced to take home; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to:
- (i) the NSW Minister for Environment to bring forward the phasing out of non-compostable fruit and vegetable stickers from 2030 to 2027;
 - (ii) the Federal Minister for the Environment to review the progress of the goals and transparency of the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation targets, and urging mandatory product packaging stewardship for supermarkets, instead of voluntary schemes; and
 - (iii) the Chief Executive Officers of the 2 major supermarket chains Coles and Woolworths, and in addition the Chief Executive Officers of IGA and Aldi urging them to reduce plastic packaging in fresh food and to take the lead on the introduction of a plastic free loose produce campaign.

Carried unanimously.

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