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Restaurants should stop serving in disposable foodware

Dine-in restaurants in Australia should be banned from serving food and drink in disposable packaging, the Boomerang Alliance of 55 NGOs said today.

“This measure to eliminate waste and plastic pollution has just been introduced in France and soon the UK, and we should promptly follow suit as Australia ramps up its actions on waste and pollution. Consumers eating in restaurants, in particular in fast food outlets, should receive their food in reusable plates, bowls, cups and utensils that can be repeatedly washed and used by those restaurants,” said Jeff Angel, Director of the Alliance.

“This should be a first step towards making reusable foodware more commonplace. Next must be to provide reusable cups and containers for takeaway customers.”

“With Australian governments committed to phasing out all unnecessary and problematic plastic packaging by 2025, the ban will be a key measure at both the restaurant service level and to influence consumer attitudes to disposable packaging. A ban should be introduced by 1 January 2024.”

“EU nations are speeding ahead with a range of effective actions on single use packaging and Australia needs to catch up,” said Mr Angel.

International Policy Actions

In the European Union, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes are proposed for single use plastic packaging. These include requirements on producers to cover the costs of the education, collection, transport, and treatment of single use plastic packaging by 2024.

Many EU countries (and other regions) are taking further steps as part of the EU Directive on Single Use Plastics. Here is a snapshot of new policies.

Country	Items	Action	Date
Germany	SUP coffee cups and food containers	Mandatory requirements for all cafes and food outlets to offer reusable alternatives	January 2023
The Netherlands	SUP coffee cups and food containers	Ban on SUP coffee cups Fee on other plastic packaging	July 2023
France	SUP coffee cups Reusable cups and plates	Banned (exemption for compostables) Mandatory reuse in restaurants	2020 January 2023
Ireland	SUP coffee cups	0.20-euro fee	January 2023
Greece	SUP coffee cups and food containers	0.05-euro fee	January 2022
Portugal	SUP packaging in ready to eat meals and beverages	0.30-euro fee	July 2022
Sweden	SUP coffee cups, food containers and other packaging	Investigating the introduction of new policies and fees for reusables and SUP coffee cups	current
Italy	SUP products	Plastics Tax	January 2023
Spain	SUP products	Plastics Tax	January 2022
Other Examples			
UK	Reusable foodware	Proposed mandatory requirements Plastic tax on SUP packaging without recycled content	2025 2022
Scotland	SUP coffee cups	25 pence fee	pending
Vancouver, Canada	SUP coffee cups	25 cents fee	January 2022
Berkeley, California	SUP coffee cups	25 cents fee	January 2020
California	SUP products	Considering tax on all SUP products	current
McDonalds UK, Burger King US	SUP coffee cups	Trialling returnable cup systems	current
All Starbucks EU/Africa/Middle East	SUP coffee cups	Offering reusable cups share	2025
Korea	SUP coffee cups	Introduced CDS for cups sold at coffee shops and fast-food outlets	2022