



## *Choosing to Reuse in Australia*

## TERMS OF USE

The Boomerang Alliance has developed this publication to help make reusables more commonplace in Australia.

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## ABOUT BOOMERANG ALLIANCE

We are a national peak not-for-profit group formed in 2003 with the aim of a zero-waste society. We comprise 55 national, state and local allies. Our core strategic objectives are:

- 1.) To transition to a zero-waste society by leveraging strategic opportunities to drive best practice resource efficiency and recovery.
- 2.) To eliminate plastic pollution entering the terrestrial and marine environments.

Our keystone program, **Plastic Free Places**, works in communities to directly reduce single-use plastic items, and to empower the community to make lasting changes towards a circular economy.

Find out more at  
**[www.boomerangalliance.org.au](http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au)**

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*'Plastic pollution could be slashed by 80 percent by 2040 if countries and companies use existing technologies to make significant policy shifts'*

UN Turning Off the Tap report 2023



## INTRODUCTION

The UN 'Turning Off the Tap' roadmap lists reuse as its first key action. It states that reuse options - 'refillable bottles, bulk dispensers, deposit return schemes and packaging take-back can reduce 30% of plastic pollution by 2040. To realise its potential government must help build a stronger business case for reusables' [1].

All Australian governments have endorsed a target of having all packaging reusable, compostable or recyclable by 2025. In reality, they have done very little to support the reuse option.

If we are to end plastic waste and pollution, making reusables commonplace in Australia must become a priority. In this country, the uptake of reusables has been largely a matter of voluntary action by early adopter businesses and the public. This needs to change.

This report seeks to highlight how the introduction of government policies, supported by a change in business practices and services, will establish a positive outcome to make reusables commonplace.

As jurisdictions overseas adopt more reusable foodware and packaging it is time for Australia to follow suit. We cannot simply recycle our way out of plastic pollution.

This report outlines that a switch to reusables is achievable and has already started to happen. It is largely a matter of changing the disposable habits that have dominated our current behaviours. These habits were formed as a result of products and processes introduced in the last 50 years on the basis of consumer convenience. This has resulted in a marine plastic crisis and unmanageable volumes of wasted and littered single-use plastics.

Reverting to more reusable product use is about putting greater value on ecologically-sustainable practices that reduce resources, waste, litter and associated emissions from the manufacture and use of disposable packaging.

Governments, in addition to policies to phase-out problem single-use plastics, must turn their attention to reusable packaging and food ware. Current National Packaging targets include having 70% of plastic packaging composted or recycled by 2025. A 30% reuse target would complete that picture.

# THE BENEFITS OF REUSABLES

The move to a circular economy is about eliminating waste and pollution, and by extension, that includes greenhouse gas emissions. As the waste hierarchy shows, the reuse of products and materials is a high order and preferred option when it comes to reducing waste. Put simply, reusable products will mean less single-use packaging being manufactured and less packaging waste going to landfill or litter.

Based on business as usual, plastic production will be 19% of global greenhouse emissions by 2040 [1], so switching to reusables will reduce GHG emissions. The caveat being that reusable items must be reused multiple times sufficient to offset and replace single-use packaging.

The associated reduction in single-use packaging also means less cost to cafes and other food retailers, to local councils through more efficient collection and clean up services, and more savings that can be passed on to individual consumers. It will mean less cost to the environment and wildlife threatened by plastic pollution.

Reusable foodware is more ecologically sustainable. It reduces waste and pollution whilst lowering energy and fossil fuel use.

For businesses and individual users, it's another opportunity to reduce their carbon footprint.



## DEFINITIONS & STANDARDS

The Boomerang Alliance aligns with the following definitions of what constitutes a single-use and a reusable packaged item.

### SINGLE USE

A single-use product means a product that is not conceived, designed, or placed on the market to accomplish, within its lifespan, multiple trips, or rotations by being returned to a producer for refill or re-used for the same purpose for which it was conceived [2].

Single-use products are typically intended to be used just once or for a short period of time before being disposed of.

A single-use product does not become a reusable product just because it can be washed or is manufactured with a thicker material. It needs to be manufactured as a reusable product under reusability (multi-use) criteria.

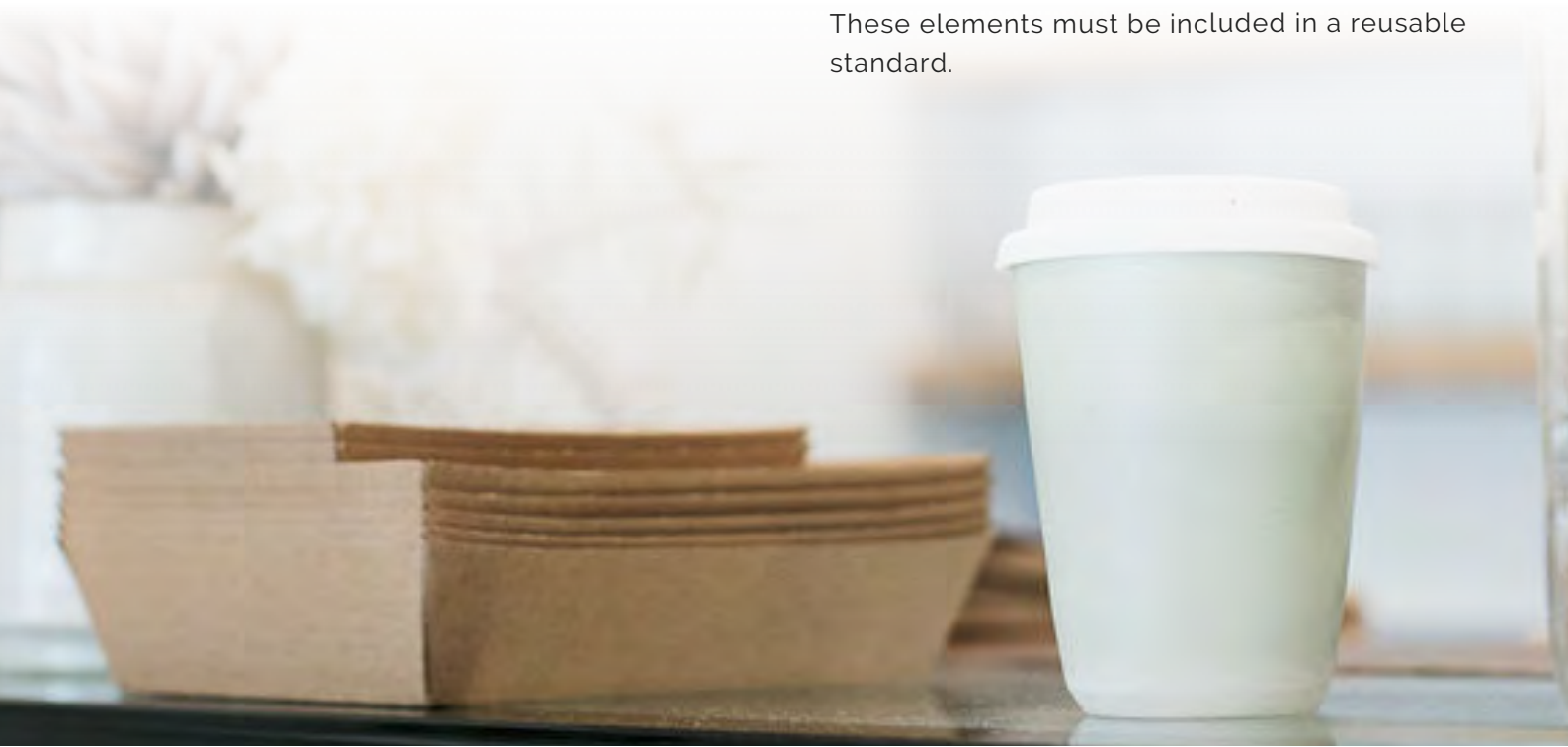
### MULTIPLE USE OR REUSABILITY

A reusable product is one that is conceived, designed, and placed in the market to achieve a minimum number of refill/return cycles (based upon a determined standard) for the same primary purpose. Reusability must be on the basis that systems and services are in place that ensure that refill/return cycles can be achieved.

The Boomerang Alliance has proposed these general rules for reusable packaging:

- Conceived and designed to accomplish a minimum number of reuse cycles or have a lifespan warranty.
- Durable construction and perceived by the consumer as a genuinely reusable item.
- Systems and services in place to allow for consumer reuse or return options.
- Reuse option systems and services must be proportional, user-friendly, and designed to meet reuse requirements.
- Recoverable/recyclable at end of life.
- Certified against a reusable standard with appropriate labelling.

These elements must be included in a reusable standard.





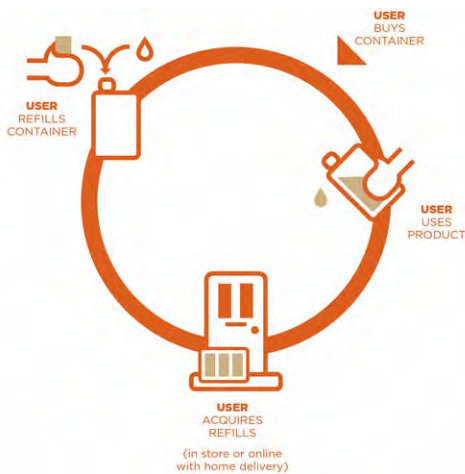
# THE FOUR REUSE MODELS (PACKAGING)

As reusable items are commonly used in differing circumstances, different rules or requirements need to be applied, depending upon those circumstances. For instance, there are differing requirements between a refillable cup that is returned to a business, washed, and then reused, compared to reusable picnic ware used by a household for picnics over an extended period.

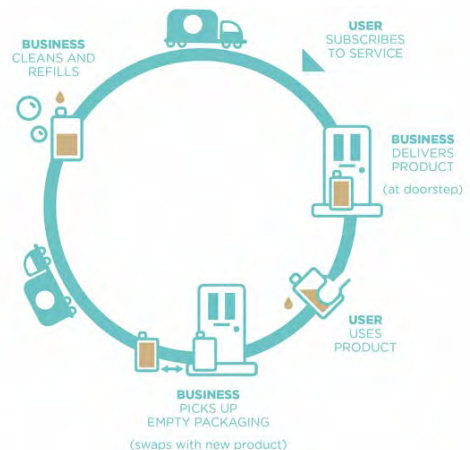


## THE FOUR REUSE MODELS

### Refill at home



### Return from home



### Refill on the go



### Return on the go



# THE MOST COMMON PLACES FOR REUSABLE PACKAGING

There is currently significant opportunity for the increased uptake of reusables in Australian society. Simply by looking abroad (as well as small scale reuse systems that are successfully operating onshore), it becomes obvious that there are effective strategies and systems available to implement throughout a broad spectrum of scenarios and at a heightened scale.

The Boomerang Alliance identifies the following sectors and activities as areas of opportunity where reusables can be implemented and expanded upon:

- Events
- Takeaway outlets/cafes
- Supermarkets/retail
- Specified controlled environments (e.g., office blocks, sports stadiums)
- Transport services
- Beverage containers collected through container deposit scheme

In the pages that follow we provide examples where reusable use could, and should, be expanded. The four reuse models (outlined on page 4) can be applied to these environments to determine the most appropriate reuse arrangement.

The next steps for government must be to define multiple use (reuse), identify criteria for the manufacture of fit-for-purpose reusable products, and set the rules under which these products should be used.

Without government intervention, these systems will continue to be only adopted by a small portion of individuals and businesses.





# EVENTS

Public events and markets are managed, usually by a central organiser, enabling opportunities to introduce reusables. Examples include:

- Refillable tumblers/cups/containers, either supplied by the venue or an external supplier (see Table 1 for examples).
- Vendors accepting BYO cups/containers from consumers.
- Events providing reusable foodware for the use of all vendors, and a wash-up station.

Stadiums QLD are examining cup reuse systems that could be used at all major stadiums in the state. This is a direct example of how a government agency can positively impact uptake of reusables at large events [4].

Event organisers, stadiums and sports clubs are increasingly taking up the reusable challenge, introducing new systems and changing habits and practices.



Image courtesy of Tourism Noosa

TABLE 1. SOME REUSE SYSTEMS CURRENTLY ACTIVE AT EVENTS IN AUSTRALIA

NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	SYSTEMS OF USE
<a href="#">Green My Plate</a>	Australia wide	Plates & bowls	Supply reusable plates and bowls to food vendors, and then wash and recirculate.
<a href="#">Bettercup</a>	Australia & NZ	Cups & tumblers	Reusable cups and tumblers at bars. Customer pays a deposit which is refunded when cup is returned.
<a href="#">Turn</a> (formerly Globelet)	Australia, NZ & US	Cups & tumblers	Consumers at events download app and return cups to a 'smart bin' when finished.
<a href="#">eCups</a>	Adelaide	Cups	Customer pays a deposit and receives the deposit back when the cup is returned.
<a href="#">Wise</a>	Australia	Cups	Customer pays a deposit and receives the deposit back when the cup is returned.
<a href="#">Stack Cups</a>	Australia	Cups	Customer pays a deposit and receives the deposit back when the cup is returned.
<a href="#">Go 2 Cup</a>	WA	Cups, plates & bowls	Customer pays a deposit and receives the deposit back when the item is returned.
<a href="#">Wosup</a>	Australia	Cups	Customer uses the cup and returns it to specially marked bins. Event chooses if a deposit is used.

Note: Boomerang Alliance does not endorse any particular brand or product.

# TAKEAWAY OUTLETS/CAFES

Takeaway outlets generally serve food and drink in single-use packaging. The switch to reusable cups is a cost saving for cafes and their customers. Options could include:

- Encouraging customers to bring BYO cups/containers.
- Selling/offering reusable cups/water bottles/containers/straws.
- Offering a cup/container take-back service and/or swap network.

In Australia, a number of swap networks have emerged which provide cafes with the logistics and resources to provide reusable takeaway (and return) items to their clients, replacing the need for single use (see Table 2).

The Boomerang Alliance has proposed that all cafes offering takeaway beverages also offer or sell reusable cups and lids.

A levy should also be applied to all disposable cups and lids. We also advocate that only reusable foodware should be offered to customers who dine-in.

During COVID restrictions, claims were made that reusable cups were less safe than single use. This was false. No jurisdiction in Australia prevents or discourages the use of reusable or BYO coffee cups. In fact all support more reusable cup use.

There are also systems available to cafes in some areas to replace single-use milk bottles, coffee beans etc., through reusable/refillable kegs/ canisters. One example is the [Udderway](#), a bulk milk system that incorporates an on-bench dispenser (tap), and reusable milk kegs that are purchased, used and returned to participating dairies to be refilled.

TABLE 2. SOME REUSABLE CUP AND CONTAINER SYSTEMS IN AUSTRALIA

NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	SYSTEMS OF USE
<a href="#">Green Caffein</a>	Australia wide, over 750 cafes	Cups	App
<a href="#">Returnr</a>	Melbourne	Cups & containers	Deposit
<a href="#">Renome</a>	Mostly centred in Perth	Cups	Deposit
<a href="#">Infinity Box</a>	Victoria	Containers	Depost
<a href="#">RePlated</a>	Australia wide - available at over 250 venues	Containers	App
<a href="#">Our Kinds</a>	Perth only	Cups	Subscription
<a href="#">Austep</a>	Perth metro (north) with a view to expansion	Containers	App and subscription
<a href="#">Reusably</a>	Adelaide, with a view to expansion	Cups & containers	App
<a href="#">HuskeeSwap</a>	Australia-wide and globally	Cups	Customer purchases their own cup which can then be swapped.

Note: Boomerang Alliance does not endorse any particular brand or product.

## A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME COMMONLY USED EXAMPLES

### GREEN CAFFEEN

Cup swap system that currently active in over 750 cafes throughout Australia. It operates on a 'scan, swap, drink, return' model. Users can participate for free as long as the cup is scanned back into the system (at any participating cafe) within 30 days.

### RETURNR

Returnr offers a variety of reuse options, including:

- Workplace Micropool - a solution to provide to staff that gives the resources needed to completely eliminate single-use waste.
- Marketplace - a membership-based service offering a waste-free solution for groceries, liquor & pre-made meals from boutique & specialty brands, delivered weekly in reusable packaging, with empty packaging collection & washing service.
- Food Service Partners - provides cafes and restaurants reusables cups and containers (by way of monthly membership fee) that are then provided to take away customers in lieu of single-use items. Customers pay a deposit on the item which is refunded upon return.

### HUSKEE

Huskee Swap is a buy-in system where the customer purchases the cup at participating retailers, then swaps the cup back into the system at any participating cafe.

Participating cafes clean all swapped cups. Customers may also opt to keep their own cup and not swap it out.







TABLE 3. REUSABLE SYSTEMS FROM OVERSEAS

NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	SYSTEMS OF USE
<a href="#"><u>Costa Clever Cup</u></a>	UK	Cups	Reusable cup with contactless payment capability.
<a href="#"><u>Recup</u></a>	Germany	Cups	App and deposit
<a href="#"><u>Revolv</u></a>	Bali, Hong Kong, Singapore	Cups	App and smart drop off stations
<a href="#"><u>CLUBZERO</u></a>	London	Cups	Shared, trackable cups with central distribution and cleaning
<a href="#"><u>DabbaDrop</u></a>	UK	Containers	Subscription service for ready-made meals delivered in reusable containers.
<a href="#"><u>CupCycling</u></a>	New Zealand	Cups	Free to borrow using App. User charged if not returned.
<a href="#"><u>Again Again</u></a>	NZ	Cups & containers	Free to loan with replacement fee if not returned.

Note: Boomerang Alliance does not endorse any particular brand or product.

# SUPERMARKETS/RETAIL

Many consumers like options to use reusable containers for products. Bulk buying outlets (e.g. The Source) and some home and personal care retailers (e.g Biome) offer reusable options, and there are many examples of small retailers offering delivery services in returnable containers, and small businesses offering refill services within their communities. These all provide good examples of this practice.

Other options could include:

- BYO produce bags available/for sale by retailers.
- Supermarkets and retailers only provide reusable shopping bags that meet a reusable bag standard (see Appendix 5).
- Introduce reusable/returnable containers for a range of products (e.g., food, soft drinks , personal care, batteries, bulk packaging).
- Extend self-service areas (e.g. nuts, pet food) and provide returnable containers.
- Create 'plastic free' and 'reusable only container' aisles at supermarkets.
- Offer only certified reusable foodware for outdoor and picnic use.

- BYO containers for delicatessen/meat and other putrescible products. This could be a subscription service where containers are returned by the consumer, washed and then reused.
- Take-back containers, crates and returnable bags for delivery services.



Image from Nestle. These refillable containers are returned to TOMRA Reverse Vending Machines in Germany

TABLE 4. EXAMPLE REUSE SYSTEMS ACTIVE IN SUPERMARKETS WORLDWIDE

NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	HOW IT WORKS
<a href="#">Loop</a>	Pilots in US, France, UK	Reusable packaging for grocery items. Available in stores and online	Products in reusable packaging with home delivery pick up and drop off service.
<a href="#">Sea Me</a>	Germany & Austria	Reusable packaging for cosmetics	Empty bottles are returned to deposit machines or to supermarkets and drugstores.
<a href="#">The Wally Shop</a>	New York City	Pantry essentials, household cleaning and personal care	Items are delivered in reusable packaging, secured with deposits.
<a href="#">Re</a>	UK	Reusable packaging for beverages, personal care, homecare, packaged foods	Brands switch to smart returnable packaging. Retailers sell products and facilitate return points. Consumers purchase and return.
<a href="#">Zero Co</a>	Australia	Reusable packaging for home and personal care products	Customer orders refillable pouches online, which are returned and refilled.

Note: Boomerang Alliance does not endorse any particular brand or product.



## SPECIFIC CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTS

Controlled environments provide opportunities to manage reusable systems more effectively. As an example, it is easier to manage vendors and transactions within a campus or office block, than at an unmanaged retail precinct or public place.

Many Australian Universities have introduced plastic-free campus plans, predominantly aimed at reducing single use packaging at hospitality locations and at events.

As 'controlled environments' we advocate that universities take a leading role and make their campuses exclusively 'reusable'. Systems are already available to make this happen.



Image courtesy of UQ

Public institutions can also provide reuse opportunities. Environments such as organised food courts, where historically crockery and cutlery was once centrally collected, washed, and then reused, can revert back to a reusable model.

Similarly, this notion can be engaged by office workers who frequent cafes within or nearby their office block, purchasing items in disposable cups and containers, instead of using a BYO alternative.

In all scenarios options to increase uptake include:

- Reusable cup and container services for the whole site or location.
- Container take-back systems provided by vendors.
- Public and institutional events and markets providing reusable service and networks. Swap programs such Green Caffein, Renome and Huskee Swap can also be utilised here.

Other examples highlighting possible opportunities include:

- [Cercle](#) - provides a circular system in office buildings
- [Returnr Workplace Micropool](#) - provides reusable solutions for workplaces, including containers and cups.



Image courtesy of Cercle



Image courtesy of Returnr



IN TRANSPORT

Many bulk and online purchased products are transported using single-use plastic packaging that is simply discarded when the goods are received.

According the the National Plastics Plan 2021, expanded polystyrene (EPS) in loose fill and moulded consumer packaging was due to be phased out by July 2022 [5]. However, this practice still continues.

Some goods may require specialised packaging such as refrigeration, but most do not. We need to change practices so that transported goods use, as a first option, returnable packaging.

Supermarket customer delivery services need an urgent overhaul. These services should be providing only returnable bags and containers to their customers. A similar approach should be taken for business to business deliveries.

TABLE 5. REUSABLE CONTAINERS FOR TRANSPORT OF GOODS

NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	USES
<a href="#">Livri</a>	US	Reusable boxes with enhanced design for delivery of fresh food.	Fresh food, perishables, and meal kits
<a href="#">Limeloop</a>	US	Reusable packaging for web store orders with integrated tracking system.	eCommerce, online shopping
<a href="#">Returnity</a>	US	Custom-designed durable shipping bags and boxes.	eCommerce, online shopping.

Note: Boomerang Alliance does not endorse any particular brand or product.



Image courtesy of Liviri

CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEMES

A specific opportunity exists to encourage increased reusable bottle use by including these under container deposit schemes.

Currently, all containers collected in Australia under these schemes are single use and collected to be recycled. Including collection of reusable bottles under the schemes would encourage and support the adoption of more reusable bottles by manufacturers and make these bottles more commonplace.

In many countries, notably Germany, refillable bottles are collected in this way. Over 50% of bottles in Germany are refillable and reused multiple times [6]. When introducing a CDS in Austria recently, the government included a requirement that refillable bottles should be part of the service.

As is the case in Germany, the Boomerang Alliance recommends that Australian container refund schemes consider the introduction of reusable/refillable containers. In 2022 Coca Cola announced that 25% of all their containers will be reusable by 2030.



TABLE 6. EXAMPLES OF REUSABLE BOTTLE SYSTEMS

NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	EFFECT
Brazil	Coca-Cola Brazil Universal Bottle	A reusable PET bottle sold in Latin America.	Replaces 200 million single use bottles per year
Germany	DRS (container collection system)	Refillable bottles are collected at RVM depots for a refund	The market share of refillable glass bottles in Germany is over 50%
Norway	Infinitum (private NFP supported by the beverage industry)	A CDS that works with refillable glass containers, with a high deposit refund of 20-30cents	2021 report found a return rate on all beverage containers sold of 92.3%
New Zealand	Swappa Crate	For beer only, established in 1920	Reusable glass bottles are loaned to NZ's two major breweries to fill. Consumers pay an upfront deposit redeemed off their next crate purchase

Please refer to The Ellen Macarthur [Reuse Rethinking Packaging Report](#) for more details as well as the other highlighted reuse schemes currently in use around the world.  
\*Another comprehensive report on the state of reusables in New Zealand can be found [here](#)

# INTERNATIONAL POLICY ACTIONS

A number of countries in Europe are beginning to pave the way on mandatory reusable packaging policies. The first steps being taken focus on reusable cups and dine-in practices.

## GERMANY

The German Environment Ministry on the 1st of January 2023, introduced a regulation that every catering business offering food or drinks to go, must provide reusable containers for customers. This includes cups for every size of beverage the venue offers. The regulations apply to every food-selling venue that has either 80 square metres of space or more than five employees

## FRANCE

A ban on disposable packaging including single use plates, cups and cutlery for meals consumed on site in restaurants with 20 seats or more, was introduced on 1 January 2023. Consumers eating in restaurants, including fast food outlets, will now receive their food in reusable packaging that can be repeatedly used by those restaurants

## EUROPEAN UNION

Furthermore, to meet the European Union Plastics Directive as well as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes in the European Union, responsibility is placed on producers to cover the costs of the education, collection, transport, and treatment of single-use plastic packaging by 2024. As a result, a number of other EU countries (and other regions) are taking further steps to address this directive. Here is a snapshot of measures some countries are taking to encourage reusable cup uptake.





**TABLE 7. EU REUSABLE EXAMPLES**

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 for reusables and fee on 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 a reusable cup-share program	2025

# POLICIES AND PRACTICES

## REQUIRED TO MAKE REUSABLE FOOD AND BEVERAGE PACKAGING COMMONPLACE

As the UN Turning Off the Tap roadmap outlines plastic pollution must be slashed by 80% by 2040, with a switch to reuse identified as a priority action.

In our view the most obvious strategy is to make a start with the 'controlled environments' outlined in this paper, where the opportunity for change is most achievable. That change should start with drink cups and lids (hot and cold beverages) and with food containers; items used for food and drink consumed away from home.

**For Government**, the first step must be to define reuse and criteria for use (see page 4 and 5).

The next step is a national Reusable Packaging Policy to deliver a 30% reusable target. Within this, the Boomerang Alliance proposes a specific 50% reuse target for identified consumer goods.

**For manufacturers, suppliers and businesses**, we need innovation and support to achieve these national outcomes and targets. A focus on disposable cups and containers means workplaces can more easily adopt reusable practices, and the food/ hospitality sector and takeaway/ delivery services can switch away from single-use disposable items. These will be replaced with services based upon refill and return systems.

In the next two pages, we have outlined specific measures and interventions. These are initial steps, and as an innovative society, we should be able to do a lot more.



Image courtesy of Recup



Image courtesy of Burger King, Germany

## REQUIRED GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 1 A Product Stewardship Scheme for Packaging with mandated targets. The National Packaging targets should be adopted, with an additional 30% target for reusable packaging. Within this should be a 50% reuse target for identified consumer goods, such as beverage, home and personal care products [1], and a planned phase out of disposable takeaway cups and containers by 2030.
- 2 A PS Scheme must include national standards for reusable, compostable and recyclable packaging, with labeling for products certified to a standard.
- 3 The National Plastics Plan and any state/ territory plastic reduction plans must include measures to increase reusable uptake.
- 4 Government procurement policies should include best practice guidelines to increase reusable and returnable items provided in services to government.

## SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS (2023-25)

- 5 The adoption of a reusable shopping bag standard for all retailers (see Appendix 5).
- 6 A ban on the use of single-use plastic foodware for dine-in at restaurants and cafes.
- 7 Mandatory requirements that all outlets offering takeaway food and drink also offer reusable cups, lids and containers to their customers, and participate in cup/container share networks.
- 8 Introduce a levy of 25 cents on all takeaway disposable cups and containers to discourage use/ fund reuse systems.
- 9 Government funding support for pilot projects that lead to the establishment of reuse collection services.
- 10 All major events and festivals, and sports stadiums provide reusable drink cups and food containers with collection infrastructure systems for all patrons.
- 11 Include reusable bottles and containers as eligible items under all State/Territory Container Deposit Schemes.



# GETTING STARTED

## CHANGING OUR HABITS - FIRST (OF MANY) STEPS

Existing habits and practices will not change without the active involvement of government, business and other institutions. This must be framed to achieve mandated targets on reuse. As container deposit schemes have demonstrated, desired outcomes will only be achieved where there is a legislated requirement, and systems are put in place to change behaviour.

- 1 Commonwealth, State and local governments must lead the way by providing (at government workplaces, public facilities and events) reusable, cups, containers and utensils services for all staff, customers and guests.
- 2 Business/institutions must contribute new arrangements and services, starting with 'controlled environments', and include:
  - The provision of reusable cups/containers for staff at workplaces.
  - Establish returnable cups/containers services and share networks at cafes, takeaway outlets and food courts.
  - All sports stadiums and major events only provide reusable/refillable cups and containers for food and beverages.
  - Universities, large public institutions and corporate offices should be going exclusively 'reusable' for any hospitality services at their locations.
  - Community events, markets, and schools should provide reusable cups and containers, have them collected, washed and returned for future use.
- 3 Specific industry sectors should urgently investigate and introduce reusable food services:
  - Supermarkets and other retailers providing returnable containers for perishable foods and delivery services.
  - All retailers to expand the use of returnable containers (in store) in line with national reusable targets.
  - Transport and wholesale service providers switch to returnable containers for food, goods, bulk items and businesses to businesses services.
  - Shopping centre managers switch back to reusable foodware at food courts.
  - Airlines, and long distance train and ferry services provide customers with reusable foodware for any served food and drink, e.g., Bonza Airlines offer a reusable drink service (see Appendix 8).
  - Beverage manufacturers investigate returnable containers and lobby for their inclusion in container collection schemes.
  - Hotels provide reusable items (bags, water bottles, cups) to guests to borrow during their stay



# APPENDIX

## 1. PLASTIC FREE PLACES

The key to changing our habits towards reusables is in establishing new practices. Behaviour change is achieved by linking public awareness of a problem, with an incentive to change, and the opportunity to make that change. It is the combination of these elements that is required. There are many community initiatives that can engage and intervene to support and help deliver behaviour change. The Plastic Free places program is one of them.

The Boomerang Alliance 'Plastic Free Places' program is a hands-on behaviour change program that works directly with food retailers, events and other organisations to assist them to switch from single-use plastics to better alternatives, such as reusable (preferred) or certified compostable items. It works with the whole packaging supply chain to help facilitate solutions, including many reusable solutions.

As an engagement program, it can be adapted to work with other sectors and with a focus on reusable practices. Our future direction is to work with 'controlled environments' to introduce reusable foodware products and systems. This can include offices, public institutions, food courts, festivals, sporting stadiums, airlines and long distance train services.

### PLASTIC FREE PLACES RESULTS (AT APRIL 1, 2023)



**1137**

**Business members**

**28**

**Event & market members**



**272**

**Plastic Free Champions**

**+20 million**

**Pieces of plastic eliminated**



## REUSABLE COFFEE CUPS/LIDS

Our program has worked alongside many cafes around the country supporting reusable actions, including:

- helping to implement established swap networks such as Green Caffein
- implementing reusable programs that encourage BYO from customers
- providing signage and support materials which encourage reuse
- the implementation of mug libraries

## REUSABLE CAFES PROGRAM

Our signature month-long Reusable Cafe's program works with cafes to significantly reduce single-use coffee cups/containers by utilising behaviour change principles that focus on building better habits to foster long-term behaviour change and cultural shifts.

The program has produced significant results. From 26 participating cafes, the average increase in beverages sold in reusables cups over the course of the program was 46.88%. This means that there was a nearly 50% increase in the number of reusable cups used comparing first week results to the last week results.

The program has revealed that people are willing to change their behaviour when provided with the right incentives and systems that support that change. Simple things such as employers providing BYO cups for employees, cafes encouraging reuse and effective cup share networks can make the difference. These actions help to normalise reusables, an important factor in helping to shift behaviour.

Our program is not limited to just cafes and takeaway outlets. We are expanding our reach and piloting arrangements at office blocks, events and major stadiums to switch to reusable containers. We expect to demonstrate that reusables can become commonplace.

## WATER REFILL ACCESS

The Plastic Free Places team have also been active in helping solve waste issues surrounding single-use water bottles with businesses, individual and at events.

To facilitate the increase of reusables in PFP Qld locations, we set up a [Water Refill Network](#) - a map of refill points that makes it easy for the community to find places to refill their water bottle. It also assists businesses to eliminate single-use water by providing a viable way to sell reusable bottles and make money on refills (through offering sparkling or chilled refills).

We believe normalising reusable water bottles by encouraging their use and making it more accessible to refill is the best way to address the problem.

The team have also worked with event organisers to install water bottle refill stations and create principles around reuse, including bans on single-use plastic water bottles and choosing vendors who support reusables.





## 2. EXAMPLE REUSE SYSTEMS FOR COSMETICS AND PERSONAL CARE

**SEA ME** - this reuse system is leading the way in reusable packaging for cosmetics and personal care in Germany. The packaging can be returned at more than 900 shops in Germany and Austria, where they are collected and sent to Sea Me to be cleaned and refilled. Consumers simply buy the product in reusable packaging and when finished, return the empty vessel back.

**RE** - partnering with some major retailers in the UK (e.g. Marks & Spencer), this systems offers reusable solutions for a range of personal care items. Brands can elect to switch to Re's standardised reusable 'smart packaging', and retailers can stock these products and facilitate return points. Consumers pay a deposit for the packaging and return it for a voucher.

**ZERO CO** - this system uses 'forever bottles' that the customer receives with their initial order. These are refilled with a reusable pouch that the customer receives and then sends back to Zero Co, to be refilled and reused in the system over and over again.



Image courtesy of RE

## 3. TOMRA INTEGRATED COLLECTION SYSTEM

TOMRA in the EU has developed a new integrated collection system for reusables in public places. The City of Aarhus in Denmark is trialing this system for its city centre.

### System for reusable packaging

#### Open managed system

– packaging providers use common infrastructure

#### Low consumer threshold

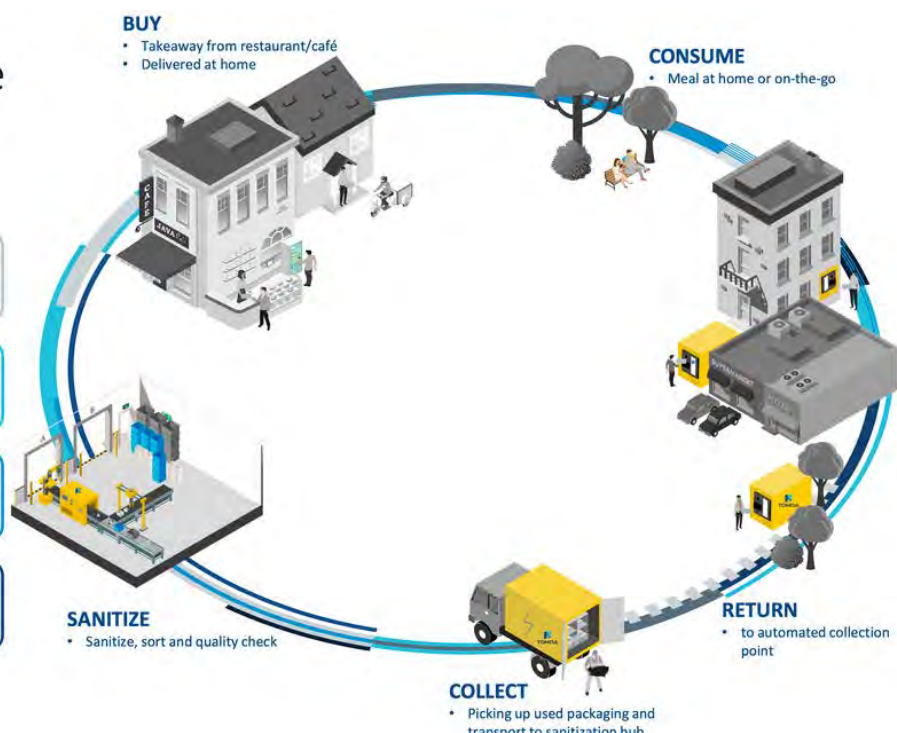
– collection network 24/7, no App needed

#### System scalability

– automated collection & central sanitization

#### System integrity & transparency

– serialized packaging, antifraud system



## 4. REUSABLE CUPS AT SPORTS EVENTS

### Behind the Scenes at Twickenham to explore sustainable strategies

By [Berenice](#), Wednesday 1 May 2019

In 2014, Twickenham Stadium introduced the eco fan cup scheme. A refundable £1 deposit is charged when fans purchase their first drink in the reusable eco cup. On leaving the stadium fans have three options: return the eco cup to be reimbursed £1; take it home as a souvenir; or deposit it in a designated charity bin and the £1 goes to the nominated charity.



Reusing the eco cup just 3 to 5 times reduces the environmental impact compared to single-use plastic. Since 2014, this sustainability initiative has:

- Saved 9.12 million single-use plastic cups going to landfill – that's enough plastic cups to fill Twickenham Stadium 1.7 times!
- Seen 2.19 million eco cups reused in people's homes across the world
- In some cases, reusable fan cups have been re-used 75 times.

## 5. A REUSABLE SHOPPING BAG STANDARD

We are proposing the adoption of a reusable shopping bag standard based upon a Californian standard, widely used in Europe. All retailers from 2024 would only be allowed to sell bags to customers that meet this standard. Some exemptions (for takeaway business could be allowed to supply paper bags).

- Independently tested and certified against a 125 shopping cycles requirement
- Strong, durable, fit for purpose construction with separate, industrially stitched handles
- A minimum thickness above 70 microns (we recommend 100 microns)

- Not contain any hazardous or harmful components that would inhibit recycling
- Have a minimum 80% recycled content, increasing to 100% where possible
- With a minimum price to encourage multiple use. We recommend a minimum \$2
- Labelled as reusable and feature an unambiguous and verifiable Reusable Shopping bag logo

At the end of its useful life a reusable bag should be collected at retail outlets for recycling.

## 6. ROADMAP TO MAKE REUSABLE COFFEE CUPS & LIDS COMMONPLACE

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE FULL POSITION STATEMENT](#)

We call on the Commonwealth, State/Territory Governments to set a national goal to phase-out all single-use coffee cups and lids by 2030 and implement a roadmap to achieve this.

Essential to achieving the 2030 goal is that all State and Territory jurisdictions implement a set of strategic interventions that will lead to that outcome by changing industry practices and public habits between 2022 and 2030.

1. Introduce mandatory requirements that all outlets providing takeaway beverages also offer/sell reusable cups/lids. All outlets must accept returned cups and/or participate in a reusable cup network. This should be in place by 2024 to coincide with single-use plastic cup bans. Disposable cups and lids must not be offered for in-house consumption.
2. Identify 'controlled and managed environments' such as sports stadiums, festivals, airline and train services, government and public institutions to be early adopters and only provide reusable cups and lids to the public from 2024. Cafes in government and corporate buildings should provide only reusables for employees under an in-house share system.
3. A levy of 25 cents (or higher) to be charged on all disposable coffee cups and lids sold from 2024 until 2030. Monies raised should be allocated to public awareness and the establishment of reusable cup systems and services.

4. Maintain continuous improvement policies to support reusable product practices. These include the removal of retailer liability associated with reusable container use and continued innovation on the design, materials and standards for all cups and containers.
5. Government Health advice to provide guidance on reusable container food safe practices. There is no evidence that the COVID virus can be spread through packaging, so policies should clearly state that disposable cups and lids do not represent a 'safe' option.

### Local Government

1. Set licensing conditions on cafes and mobile vendors that support participation in reusable services, including having a dishwasher (or access to a dishwasher) and other facilities available for those reusable services.
2. To lead by example, all local government offices and facilities should supply, and only allow reusable cups and lids for employees and their visitors from 2024.
3. Promote reusable cup and container use in their communities, and facilitate the establishment and uptake of cup share and return collection networks in their LGA.
4. Set local policies and introduce conditions for events that include the provision of reusable cups and washing facilities.



## 7. LEGAL SITUATION ON BYO CUPS & CONTAINERS IN AUSTRALIA

The Food Act 2006 (the Food Act) is the primary piece of food safety legislation in Australia. It gives effect to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Food Standards Code). It is designed to ensure food for sale is safe and suitable for human consumption, to prevent misleading conduct in relation to the sale of food, and to apply the Food Standards Code.

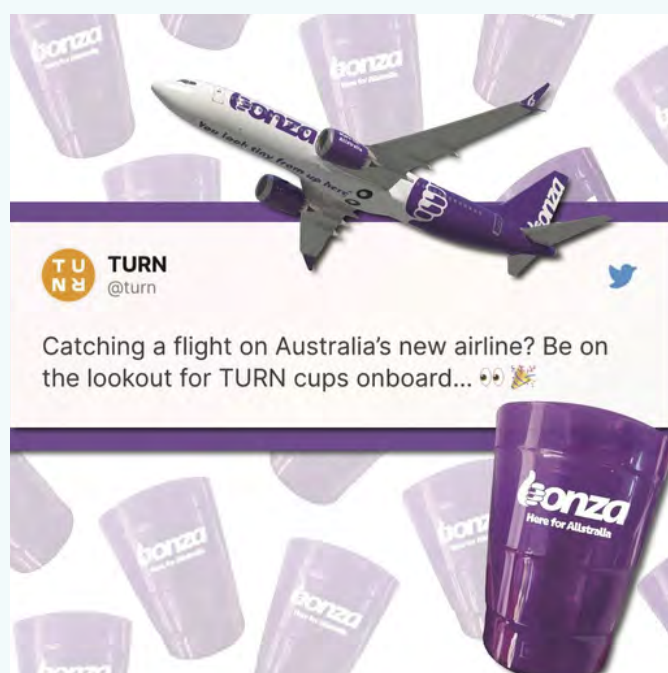
The Food Act applies national food safety requirements to food businesses and provides for regulatory oversight and risk management via licensing and food safety program provisions.

All food businesses are required to comply with the requirements of the Food Act and Food Standards Code, irrespective if they are considered licensable under the Food Act or not.

The Food Standards Code outlines food businesses requirements in relation to food safety practices, general requirements, food premises and equipment. Amongst other things, a food business must only use packaging material that is fit for its intended use, will not contaminate food, ensure food is protected from contamination during all stages and must not reuse single-use items.

In terms of consumers bringing their own container for use at a food business, there is nothing in the legislation that prevents consumers making this request of a food business. However, it is a food business's decision whether they allow this practice as they must be able to demonstrate that the container is suitable for use, clean and sanitised so as to not contaminate food, and the item is not single use.

## 8. BONZA AIR - AUSTRALIAN EXAMPLE OF A CUP REUSE SYSTEM FOR AIRLINES



Reusable cups from [Turn](#) are served with all cold drinks (with potential to include coffee cups) then washed and sanitised after each use in a mobile smart washer based at Sunshine Coast Airport.



Images courtesy of Turn

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