

Plastic Free Staff Guide


Common items and how to tell them apart

Coffee Cup Lids

Compostable




Look for one or more of:

- The word 'Compostable'
- The recycling symbol '7' 
- The letters 'PLA'
- A sugarcane pulp 'natural' lid

Plastic



Look for one or more of:

- The letters 'PS' 
- The recycling symbol '6'

Note: ('Recyclable' DOES NOT mean compostable - its still plastic). Don't be fooled by 'Eco-Smart' or other branding

Coffee Cups

Compostable cups are lined with PLA



Look for one or more of:

- BioCup branding
- Cup-to-Grow symbol
- The word Compostable

Note: ('Recyclable' DOES NOT mean compostable - the cup is plastic lined. Don't be fooled by 'green' branding.

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Common questions and answers

'But coffee cups are made of paper anyway'

Coffee cups are usually made of paper with a plastic lining. The lining makes them not compostable, difficult to recycle and a problem plastic in the environment.

'But plastic is recyclable'

Yes it is, but most plastic does not actually get recycled. Much ends up littered or in landfill. Some plastic that is 'recyclable' is difficult to recycle, especially disposable coffee cups which need special facilities to recycle because they are a mix of paper and plastic. Recycling is also very energy intense, and many plastic products are recycled products and eventually end up in landfill. It's better to reduce first and recycle as a last resort.

'Why use compostable packaging if it isn't going to be composted'

Many takeaway products are littered – plastic is bad for the environment - but our home compostable products break down in the environment if littered (this isn't the case with PLA bioplastic). Compostable products have a lower environmental footprint than plastic, and use renewable resources, and many are made from farming by-products. As more businesses offer compostable products, the more the compostable product market grows, and the more composting becomes a viable solution. We are helping to create that solution.

'But paper straws cut down trees, aren't you swapping one problem for another?'

We use FSC certified paper straws which are from certified managed plantations and carbon neutral. In terms of their overall impact on the planet, they are much better than plastic straws.

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Talking Points

Some initial talking points

- 1 billion take-away coffee cups end up in landfill every year (1).
- Takeaway food & beverage packaging made up more than one third of the litter found on Australian beaches in 2017 (2).
- Plastics never break down, they just get smaller!
- Plastic is responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of seabirds, turtles, penguins and dolphins each year.

Questions to ask your customers

“Do you need a lid?” or ‘Do you need a straw?’ Some customers may not need these, and this reduces your packaging. It also encourages customers to make better choices.

“Did you bring your own bag / coffee cup today?”

It's better to phrase the question this way rather than asking, “Would you like a bag” as it reminds the customer that you'd like them to BYO reusables. If they've forgotten, remind them of the discount you offer or suggest they dine in or borrow a mug/bag from you (if you offer this). Get your regulars into good habits.

Remember, change takes time, but it's worth it. Think of the positive flow on effect you can have on the world!