

PLASTIC FREE MANDURAH

A collection of simple switches to help
you go plastic free.



What are single-use plastics?

Single use plastics are just that – plastic items that we tend to use once, maybe a few times, and then discard. If you look closely at your kitchens and bathrooms, you'll likely find a few. This guide is designed to help you identify plastic items you use regularly, including single-use plastics, and make simple swaps to create more sustainable habits.

How are they harmful?

Plastics are usually made from fossil fuels and the process of creating plastic causes a number of toxins to enter the environment. When plastics begin to break down, they simply break into smaller pieces, releasing more toxins and ending up as small pieces of plastic floating around our waterways, littered through our parks and hiding in our homes.

Microplastics are even entering our food chain, as they're eaten by fish and crustaceans, which are then consumed by people. These pieces of plastic cannot safely exist in our environment and cause incredible harm to wildlife. Lightweight plastics can easily be blown from landfill and end up in our brilliant waterways. We can all play a role in reducing the amount of plastic we use, to create a more sustainable Mandurah.

Making the change

Transitioning away from plastic

You don't need a full house makeover to start reducing plastic in your life. We suggest you choose to focus on one item or area of your life, and once you feel confident in that change, move onto the next item. By making changes at a comfortable pace, switching to sustainable options won't be as overwhelming.

There are a number of local businesses that produce and supply sustainable, environmentally friendly alternatives to regular plastic items. We encourage you to try and support local when you're making your switches and to share your plastic-free progress with your friends and family to inspire more change in our community.



Degradable, biodegradable, and compostable - what's the difference?

Degradable plastics are made with chemicals that cause the plastic to break down and disintegrate over time when exposed to sunlight and heat. When released into our environment, they break down into tiny pieces of plastic that cause damage to our wildlife if they consume it.

Biodegradable plastics are often just plastics that have microorganisms added to help it break down. Bioplastics are biodegradable materials that come from renewable sources like plants or other biological sources. There are more types of bioplastics emerging as people look for more sustainable options.

Compostable items are usually made of natural plant starch, and don't produce any toxic material. Compostable products break down in a composting system through microbial activity to form compost. In order to be classified as compostable they must meet the Australian Standard for Compostability AS4736 or AS5810. Look for these logos!



Compostable

AS 4736
ABAX 9999



Home Compostable

AS 5810
ABAX 9999

The 7R's

If you're trying to become more sustainable, there's a 7- step system you can follow to determine whether to buy, use or dispose of something.



Rethink

Think about what you're going to buy, before you buy it. It seems straightforward but consider if you could bring or reuse something rather than buy something.



Refuse

Avoid buying and using things you don't need, especially single use plastics. Saying no to plastic straws, cutlery and takeaway containers can help inspire local eateries and cafés to make more sustainable switches too.



Reduce

By purchasing things that last a long time, reducing the amount that you use and focusing on buying products with less packaging, you'll reduce your plastic in no time.



Reuse

Make a commitment to purchasing items that can be reused or shared with others. Use containers that you can refill and buy second-hand where possible.



Re-purpose

Be a bit creative and find new ways to use items that have served their original purpose. Get a Pinterest board going with ideas for repurposing household items!



Recycle

Can't reuse or re-purpose? Check to see if it's recyclable. Make sure it's clean, dry and the right size - and place it in the correct bin. Ensure that you only place recyclable items in the recycling bin, as contamination causes major issues when it comes to maximising our community recycling.



Rot and reclaim

Compost anything that is suitable for a home compost system. Food scraps are a great place to start! Got something that can't be composted? Reclaim its value by transforming that waste to into energy that can be used to fuel our community.

How to use this guide

One of the first places we can start to make a difference is our homes. We've included some ideas for simple swaps you can make in different areas of your life to become more sustainable and make an impact.

Step 1

Choose an area you'd like to focus on (kitchen, bathroom, home office, etc.)

Step 2

Identify the item you'd like to switch.

Step 3

Look through the suggested alternatives and see if there's one that works for you – or do some extra research to find something better.

Step 4

Make the switch and start again!

Keep an eye out for additional handy tips throughout this guide!

It starts at the shops

	Plastic-free alternatives
Plastic bags	Bring your own bags along. If you forget your bags, opt for paper bags over soft plastic bags.
Produce bags	Invest in cotton mesh produce bags or leave fruit and veggies loose and wash thoroughly.
Packaged produce	Support stores that offer plastic-free or bulk produce. Quite often this can help you save money as well.

Soft plastic recycling has been discontinued at Coles and Woolworths stores. As a result, soft plastics like bread bags, chip packets, and other flexible packaging can no longer be dropped off at supermarket collection points.


We encourage you to reduce your use of soft plastics where possible, or reuse them to extend their life. If you're unsure if an item is soft plastic, check if it's flexible enough to crumble in your hand.

Reducing single-use plastics and opting for recyclable packaging when possible can make a significant difference to our environment.



In the kitchen

	Plastic-free alternatives
Plastic wrap	Reusable, food-safe silicone covers, cloth covers, and wax wraps are fantastic alternatives to plastic wrap.
Bin bags	Consider using certified compostable bin bags or lining your bin with a few sheets of newspaper instead. This can have great impact when you combine it with home composting.
Sandwich bags	Consider wax-wraps and reusable containers for sandwiches. Food- safe silicone pouches are good options for fruit and snacks. You can also buy BPA-free, reusable sandwich bags from and use for school/work lunches, as well as to freeze food.
Plastic storage containers	Consider stainless steel and glass containers for longer-life products. Care for your existing plastic containers to get their full life. Consider ways you can reuse the containers when they're no longer suitable for food.
Baking paper	Consider food-safe silicone alternatives to baking paper and even muffin cases. Aluminium foil can also be cleaned and kept or rolled into a fist-sized ball and recycled in your yellow-lid bin.



Look carefully at some of the items you buy at the shops for sneaky plastics (teabags are a good place to start!)

In the bathroom

	Plastic-free alternatives
Soap, body wash, shampoo, and conditioner	Use bar soaps, shampoos, and conditioners (ideally ones that come in cardboard packaging). Consider purchasing refillable bottles or refilling some of your existing ones at a bulk-food/waste-free store.
Disposable razors	Swap for stainless steel safety razors and plastic-free shaving cream/foam options. Safety razors can take a bit of practice, but once you have one, you're set!
Toothbrushes and toothpaste	Switch to compostable bamboo toothbrushes and look for plastic-free alternatives to tubes of toothpaste. Remember to remove the bristles before composting, as they're often not compostable.
Dental floss	Look for plant-based floss in a recyclable or refillable container.

Buying in bulk can be a great way to avoid plastic and unnecessary packaging in the bathroom.



In the office

	Plastic-free alternatives
Pens	Use pencils (especially those made from recycled paper), or refillable pens where possible. Coloured pencils are a plastic-free alternative to wind-ups and textas.
Journals and notebooks	Buy notebooks and journals made from recycled paper. Once full, remove any non-recyclable materials (metal spines, etc.) and recycle. Also - go paperless! Sign up for paperless bills and use technology to help take notes, read documents, and make lists.
Plastic sleeves and laminating sheets	Consider if you really need to laminate. Try using cardboard or paper manila folders to separate or manage paperwork. Reuse plastic sleeves where possible.
Sticky tape and staples	Use (and reuse) paper-clips, use cork boards and drawing pins, or look into eco-friendly sticky tape options that are produced from paper or compostable materials.



As we turn to technology more and more, consider how you cover and protect your devices. Plastic free and sustainable options exist for most items.

Out and about

	Plastic-free alternatives
Drink bottles and containers	Bring your own drink bottle! Consider reinforced glass and stainless steel. Recycle any plastic bottles in your yellow-lid recycling bin and donate the lids to a charity/community group.
Coffee cups	Bring your own coffee cup or dine in if you forget. If you do end up with a takeaway cup, you can recycle the lids in your yellow-lid bin and take the bases (once they've been rinsed) to a participating 7Eleven for recycling.
Straws	Refuse a straw if you really don't need one (including paper ones with metallic embellishments that can't be composted). Pack a silicone or stainless-steel straw when out-and-about.
Cutlery	Carry your own set of cutlery in your work bag or in car. When getting takeaway, consider if you really need cutlery, and if you do, opt for wooden and compostable ones.
Food containers	Ask your local café if they will accept BYO containers and opt for cafes that have cardboard, biodegradable containers. Recycle whatever is clean and free of food.

By carrying a few extra items (or keeping them in your glove box) you can reduce your consumption of plastic and make a difference - one bite at a time!



Your next sustainable steps

Tackling food waste

Going plastic free is just the start! If you're interested in going one step further, look into how you manage food waste at home. Composting, worm farms, and bokashi systems are all different options for turning kitchen scraps into something useful for your garden.

Grow it Local

Grow It Local connects you with a community of people who share tips, swap produce, and help divert food scraps from landfill. You can list yourself as a grower, a composter, or someone with scraps to share, making it easier to keep resources local and support a thriving, low-waste community.

Conduct a bin audit

Conducting a bin audit is a great way to understand what waste you could be avoiding and how to improve your composting and recycling.

Plastic Free July has a clear, step-by-step process on how to carry out a bin audit at home.

Join an environmental community group

There are a number of community groups in Mandurah that help nurture and protect our environment, and they're always looking for extra hands. Head to the City of Mandurah website to find a group near you or contact us for some advice on how to get involved.

Social media

Head over to these Facebook pages for support and ideas on going plastic free and reducing your waste in Mandurah.

[Zero Waste + Plastic Free Living](#)

[Coastal Waste Warriors](#)

[Sustainable Mandurah](#)

[Plastic Free July](#)