



# CHOOSING TO REUSE IN AUSTRALIA REPORT

## TERMS OF USE

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

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## ABOUT THE 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.

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

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# 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 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.

“ 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** [1]

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.**

# 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 the **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.

Australia's plastic use produced over **16MT of GHG emissions** in 2020, taking into account emissions from production and waste such as recycling or landfill [2]. Switching to reusables will reduce GHG emissions as long as reusable items are **reused multiple times**, sufficient to offset and replace single-use packaging.

“ Returnable plastic packaging has the potential to achieve meaningful environmental benefits compared to single use....reducing GHG emissions and water use by 35-70% and material use by 45-75% for selected applications.

*'Unlocking a Reuse Revolution Report 2023'*  
*Ellen Macarthur Foundation* [3]

The **associated reduction in single-use** packaging also means **less cost** to 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** in 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 [4].

Single-use products are **typically intended to be used just once** and / 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** on 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

As reusable items are commonly used in differing circumstances, **different rules or requirements need to be applied**, depending upon those circumstances. For example, 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.

## DEFINITIONS

### RETURNABLE CONTAINERS

Owned, supplied and managed **by a business** for customers to refill (e.g. in-store commodities and delivery services).

### REFILLABLE/BYO CONTAINERS

Owned and used **by an individual** for refill (BYO cup/bottle/container for in-store refills).

### REUSABLE BAGS/FOODWARE

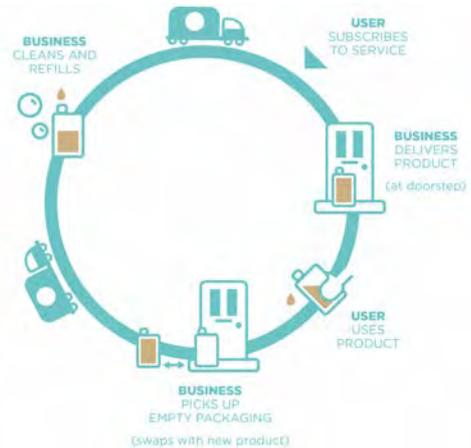
Owned **either by a business or individual** for multiple use to hold food, or for food consumption (shopping bags, cutlery, cups etc.)

## THE FOUR REUSE MODELS

### Refill at home



### Return from home



### Refill on the go



### Return on the go



# 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 scaleable 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 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 schemes

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.

The RAC Arena in Perth and events such as Woodford Folk Festival in Queensland have switched to reusable cups. Stadiums Queensland are trialling reusable cup systems [6]. The practice has become commonplace elsewhere.

Event organisers, stadiums and sports clubs are increasingly introducing new systems and changing habits and practices.



Reusable cups at Noosa Food and Wine Festival. Image courtesy of Tourism Noosa

**TABLE 1. EXAMPLES OF 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 an 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: The 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 venues and their customers. Options 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 **proposes that all cafes offering takeaway beverages must 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 venues in some areas to replace single-use milk bottles, coffee beans etc., through **reusable/refillable kegs and 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. EXAMPLES OF REUSABLE CUP & CONTAINER SWAP SYSTEMS IN AUSTRALIA**

NAME	LOCATION	TYPE	SYSTEMS OF USE
<a href="#">Renome</a>	Mostly centred in Perth	Cups	Deposit
<a href="#">Infinity Box</a>	Victoria	Containers	Deposit
<a href="#">RePlated</a>	Australia wide	Containers	App
<a href="#">Our Kinds</a>	Perth only	Cups	Subscription
<a href="#">Devolver</a>	Australia wide	Containers	App
<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.

**An interactive tool to compare swap systems available in Australia [can be found HERE](#)**

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

## A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME COMMONLY USED EXAMPLES

### 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.



### 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 venue.

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

Note: The 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. 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 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 6).
- **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 container only' 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="#">Reposit</a>	UK	Reusable packaging for beverages, personal care, homeware, 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.

See **Appendix 3 for more information** on some of these systems.

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

# 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.

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

Planes, trains and ferries with hospitality services should be **offering customers reusable** food ware.



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 (see Appendix 2 for an example).

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 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.

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**.

Returnable containers, particularly for regular business to business deliveries, are an obvious next step.



Image courtesy of Returnity

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



Image courtesy of Livri

## 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 the 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 [7]. 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 [8].



**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	Infinitem (private NFP supported by the beverage industry)	A CDS that works with refillable glass containers, with a high deposit refund of 20-30 cents	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 Foundation [Reuse Rethinking Packaging Report](#) for more details as well as the other highlighted reuse schemes currently in use around the world [9].

Another comprehensive report on the state of reusables in New Zealand is the [Reuse Aotearoa Report](#) [10].

# 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

The new EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation has set out new targets for packaging reductions and recovery. A number of EU countries (and other regions) are responding through **specific policy measures to discourage single use**. Overleaf is a snapshot of measures introduced by some of those countries.



**TABLE 7. INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES**

COUNTRY	ITEMS	ACTION	DATE
Germany	SUP coffee cups and food containers	All cafes and food outlets to offer reusable alternatives	January 2023
The Netherlands	SUP coffee cups and food containers	Ban on disposable cups for dine-in. Fee on other plastic packaging	July 2023
France	SUP coffee cups, reusable cups and plates	Banned (exemption for compostables) Mandatory reuse in restaurants	2020
Ireland	SUP coffee cups	0.25-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	Takeaway food and drink providers must offer reusable packaging	January 2024
Italy	SUP products	Plastics Tax	July 2024
Spain	SUP cups	Public events must provide reusables (with a deposit)	January 2022
Denmark	Single-use packaging	Fee for disposable cups	January 2025
Scotland	SUP coffee cups	25 pence fee	2025
Vancouver, Canada	SUP coffee cups	25 cents fee	January 2022
Berkeley/Santa Cruz+, California	SUP coffee cups	25 cents fee	2020 onwards
California	SUP Cups	Require reusable cups for dine-in at restaurants and cafes	proposed
McDonalds UK	SUP coffee cups and cold cups	Trialling returnable cup systems with Loop	2021
All Starbucks EU/Africa/ Middle East	SUP coffee cups	Offering reusable cup share program	2025
Seoul, South Korea	SUP coffee cups	Reusable cups with deposit system Fee for disposable cups	2022 2025

# POLICIES & PRACTICES

## REQUIRED TO MAKE REUSABLE FOOD AND BEVERAGE PACKAGING COMMONPLACE

As the UN 'Turning Off the Tap' roadmap outlines plastic pollution **could be slashed by 80% by 2040**, with a switch to reuse identified as a priority action [1].

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

**For Government**, the first step must be to **define reuse** and criteria for use (see page 3).

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.

The next two pages outline 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 (PS) 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 that requires materials to be recovered in practice and at scale.
- 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 (2024-27)

- 5 The adoption of a reusable shopping bag standard** for all retailers (see Appendix 6).
- 6 A ban on all disposable cups/lids and plastic food containers** by 2027.
- 7 Regulations that all outlets** offering takeaway food and drink also offer reusable cups, lids and containers. No disposable food ware should be provided for dine-in.
- 8 Introduce a levy of 25 cents** or more 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, 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 utensil services for all staff, customers and guests.
- 2 Business/institutions** could anticipate future policies by adopting new services, starting with 'controlled environments':

  - **Staff at workplaces** provided with reusable cups/containers.
  - **Cafes, takeaway outlets and food courts** establish returnable cup/container services.
  - **All 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 food ware for any served food and drink (see Appendix 9).
  - **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. REUSE DECLARATION

### THE BOOMERANG ALLIANCE IS CALLING FOR

#### 1 A LEGALLY BINDING TARGET TO ENSURE 30% OF PACKAGING REUSABLE BY 2030

All governments and the packaging sector have committed to 70% of used packaging being composted or recycled. A 30% reuse target completes the picture.

**HOW?** By scaling refill bottles, bulk dispensers, deposit returns and packaging takeback options (UN Report 2023).

#### 2 MANDATORY EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

Producers take full responsibility for the entire life cycle of the packaging they put on the market, including soft plastics.

**HOW?** Producers design products to a standard and pay the full cost for accurate labelling/ consumer education, transport, collection, and recovery of materials back to secondary markets, without creating waste.

#### 3 A NATIONAL BAN ON SINGLE-USE CUPS & PLASTIC FOOD CONTAINERS BY 2027

**HOW?** From 2025, all food & beverage takeaway outlets also offer/sell reusable cups and food containers. Disposable foodware must not be offered for in-house consumption. A min 25 cents levy is introduced on any disposable cups and containers used for takeaway until the ban is in place.

#### 4 CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTS GO REUSABLE

**HOW?** Sports stadiums, events, festivals, airline and train services, and public institutions provide reusable cups and containers to the public. Government and business workplaces provide reusable cups and containers for employees to use.

#### 5 ALL RETAIL SHOPPING BAGS MEET REUSABLE STANDARDS BY 2025

**HOW?** A standard designed to achieve a minimum of 125 shopping cycles, with a minimum thickness of 100 microns (for plastic), stitched handles and at least 80% recycled content.

#### 6 SUPERMARKETS SCALE REFILL & REUSE

**HOW?** Offer a returnable container service for delis and other commodities, and returnable crates for delivery services. Give additional customer options for in-store BYO containers and refill.

#### 7 REUSABLE BOTTLES INCLUDED IN CONTAINER REFUND SCHEMES

In Germany over 50% of bottles are reusable and used multiple times under a container refund scheme.

**HOW?** Make reusable bottles eligible for a refund under CRS.

IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE

## 2. 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** and **opportunity** to make that change. It is the combination of these elements that is required.

The Boomerang Alliance's '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, with a focus on reusables.

We differ from other community initiatives by working directly with business owners **in person**, offering targeted assistance that leads to lasting and empowering change for them and their staff.

Our future direction includes working 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.

### EXAMPLE OF CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM - OFFICES

The Plastic Free Places program is implementing a '**Reusable Offices**' program with the Queensland Government's Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) offices in 2024.

The main goal is to assist DESI staff to **transition away from single-use foodware towards reusable alternatives**, and to support the increase of reusable foodware use in corporate and government offices.

The program incorporates:

- **Improved staff access** to alternatives
- **Strategic communications** based on behaviour change strategies
- **Working with surrounding cafes** to offer and accept reusables
- **Data collection**

More information can be found at [www.plasticfreeplaces.org](http://www.plasticfreeplaces.org)

### PLASTIC FREE PLACES RESULTS (AT APRIL 1, 2024)



2043

Business members

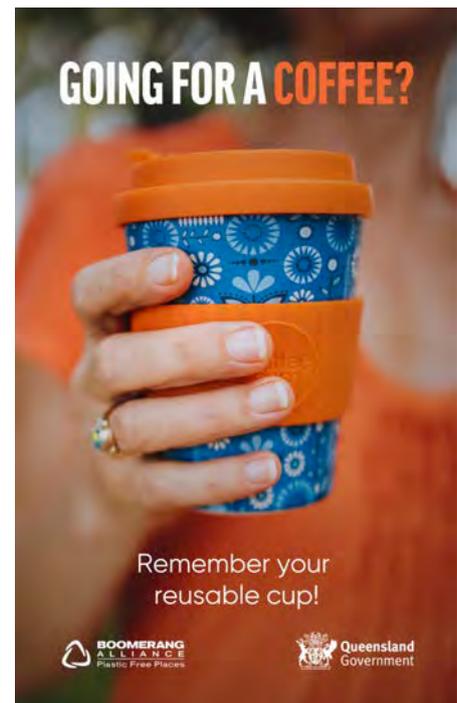


396

Plastic Free Champions

+30 million

Pieces of plastic eliminated



Results and resources will be available on our website in late 2024.

### 3. 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.

**REPOSIT** – partnering with some major retailers in the UK (e.g. Marks & Spencer), this system offers reusable solutions for a **range of personal care items**. Brands can elect to switch to Reposit'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.

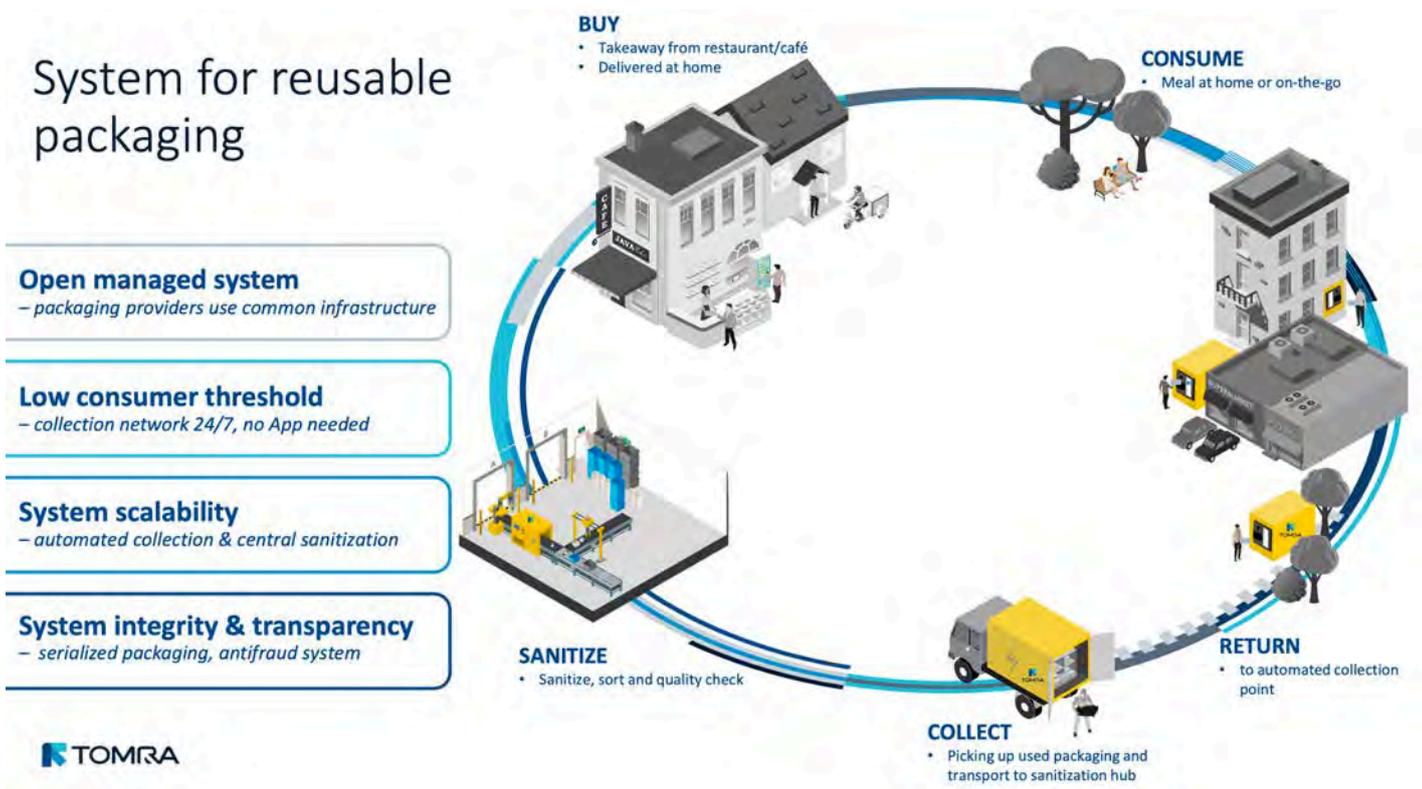
**ZERO CO** – this system uses 'forever bottles' that the customer receives with their initial order. These are **refilled with a reusable pouch** that the customer receives and then sends back to Zero Co, to be refilled and reused in the system over and over again.



Image courtesy of Reposit

### 4. 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.



## 5. 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.

## 6. 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**.

## 7. 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 2027 and implement a roadmap to achieve this.

Essential to achieving the 2027 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.

- 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. 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. Venues in government and corporate buildings should only provide 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 until ban introduced. 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.
- 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.



## 8. 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.

## 9. REUSE SYSTEMS FOR AIRLINES

Globally, an estimated **6 million tonnes** of in-flight packaging waste is generated by airlines each year [11]. Many airlines are now looking to **reduce these wastes.**

As a first step, **switching to reusable cups and containers for short haul flights** is a start. While operating, Bonza Air had offered reusable cold cups on flights.



*Changing to a mix of compostable and recyclable items still produces waste*



*Image courtesy of Turn*

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