Western Australia's
Plan for Plastics
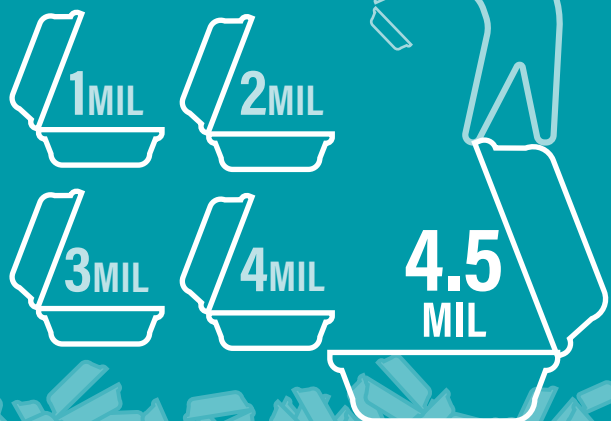
Single-use plastics ban
Expanded polystyrene (EPS) food containers

January 2022

From 1 January 2022, regulations to ban the sale, supply and distribution of expanded polystyrene (EPS) food containers in Western Australia come into effect.

Businesses, organisations and consumers who use these items are being supported to switch to reusable and non-plastic alternatives.

Quick fact

In the 2019–20 financial year, Western Australians used an estimated 4.5 MILLION EPS food containers

1 MIL 2 MIL
3 MIL 4 MIL 4.5 MIL

▶ What is being banned?

The ban applies to the sale, supply or distribution of single-use or disposable EPS food containers that are made out of plastic, whether made wholly or partly of plastic, or lined by plastic.

EPS food containers (with or without a lid) are banned. These items include all takeaway food containers such as clamshell, plates and trays. The ban extends to individual items sold or supplied, and packs of EPS containers. Products packaged instore with EPS containers and trays are included in the ban. This includes fruit and vegetable products.

▶ Why are EPS food containers being banned?

EPS is particularly damaging in the environment because it is lightweight and breaks apart easily. EPS quickly breaks up into ingestible-sized pieces and does not biodegrade.

▶ Can I still use EPS food containers I have at home?

Yes, you can. The ban does not apply to the personal use of the items, only the sale, supply and distribution of them.

► Who does the ban apply to?

The ban applies to all businesses, manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers and distributors in Western Australia. Community organisations and institutions may also be affected by the ban.

► What is **not** included in the ban?

EPS containers that are part of a pre-packaged product (e.g. on-shelf noodle cups), and EPS trays used to package raw meat or seafood products.

Other polystyrene packaging and products are part of Stage 2 of the Plan for Plastics.

► What can I use instead?

There are many options to choose from that are both better for the environment, and prevent waste going to landfill. Choose to:

- Refuse – say 'No' to an EPS food container

Did you know?

92%

92 per cent of the people surveyed in WA told us they support a ban on single-use EPS food containers

- Reuse – where possible, switch to washable and reusable food containers that are made from stainless steel, ceramic, glass, silicone or heavier reusable plastics. Customers may choose to bring their own containers, or businesses may offer to clean or package food in reusable or returnable containers.

Container return schemes are another option, and may improve customer service and costs for a business group or retailers in a shared area.

If you simply can't refuse and reusable options are not available then consider disposable takeaway food container alternatives made from non-plastic materials such as aluminium, paper/cardboard, sugarcane/bagasse and bamboo. Where using disposable options, look for opportunities to reduce waste or to purchase products that are certified as compostable to Australian Standard 4736-2006 or 5810-2010. Make sure to check the suitability of alternatives for food safety.

► When do penalties apply?

From **1 July 2022** penalties apply for the sale, supply or distribution of EPS food containers that are banned under the Environmental Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulations 2018. This is to allow time for alternative products to be developed.
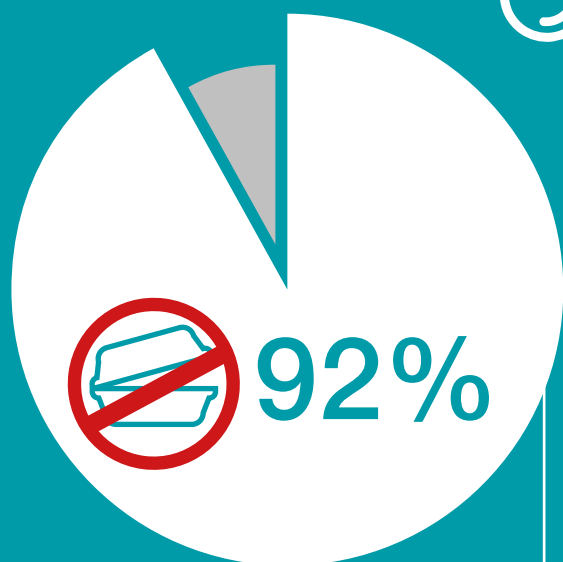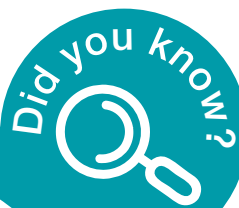
Penalties also apply to any person who supplies or manufactures EPS food containers and knowingly provides false or misleading information about its composition or whether or not it is a banned EPS food container.

► Need more information?

Call the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation: 08 6364 7000

Email: plastic-action@dwer. wa.gov.au

Check out the website: Western Australia's Plan for Plastics | Western Australian Government (www.wa.gov.au)