

13 May 2022

**R&CA – Draft Regulations to ban single-use plastic items
in Victoria**



Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA) is the national industry association representing the interests of more than 55,000 restaurants, cafés and catering businesses across Australia. The café, restaurant and catering sector is vitally important to the national economy, generating over \$37 billion in retail turnover each year as well as employing 350,000 people. Over 93 per cent of businesses in the café, restaurant and catering sector are small businesses, employing 19 people or less.

Firstly, R&CA would like to commend the Victorian government for allowing us the opportunity to provide comment on this proposal. R&CA would also like to commend the Victorian government for aligning their policies with that of Queensland, NSW, ACT and SA – bringing uniformity across much of Australia.

R&CA is broadly supportive of the proposal to ban the following items by 1 February 2023 if they are not reusable:

- Plastic straws and stirrers
- Plastic cutlery
- Plastic plates and bowls (except paper plates and bowls with polymer lining)
- Expanded polystyrene food and drink containers

R&CA makes the following recommendations that:

- Any changes made to the planned initiative between the closing of this exhibition and 1 February 2023, are raised with industry and the public for the sake of transparency and to allow industry to prepare for these changes.

- Hospitality venues are allowed to use up existing stock of banned products within in 6 months of 1 February 2023 to allow businesses to use the items if they have already bought in bulk.
- Given the rising cost of business expected over the next few years, avenues are explored to ensure that the cost of transitioning to alternative products are not exorbitant, and that exemptions or concessions are made for struggling businesses.
- The Victorian government look further into exempting items that have no other viable alternatives. One such example are the vessels used to transport frozen goods such as takeaway ice-cream, gelato or hot foods like soups.
- Polymer-lined/coated paper plates and bowls are exempt since there are no known viable alternatives. R&CA would like to discuss this further if the Victorian government is aware of any such alternative.

R&CA thanks the Victorian government for this opportunity to make comment and looks forward to further consultation and discussion on this matter.

Restaurant
& Catering