

## BACKGROUND

An Exposure Draft of the *Plastic Reduction Bill 2020* (Bill) and Explanatory Statement were publicly released via the Legislative Assembly on 13 August 2020.

The exposure draft process provided the ACT community and key stakeholders an opportunity to provide detailed feedback on the Bill and Explanatory Statement. Seven submissions were received, resulting in minor technical amendments to the Bill and Explanatory Statement prior to introduction in December 2020.

Submission feedback predominantly related to commencement and implementation, particularly given the economic impact of COVID-19 and subsequent impacts on global supply chains in sourcing alternatives.

More information is available at [yoursay.act.gov.au/single-use-plastics](https://yoursay.act.gov.au/single-use-plastics).

## SUBMISSION SUMMARY AND ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

A summary of submissions received and the ACT Government response to each is provided below.

Issue	ACT Government Response
<p><b>Timing</b> – due to the significant effort and cost associated with a phase out, while industry has been preparing for this for some time, legal certainty is critical before fully committing to implementation. Industry are therefore seeking at least 12 months to implement the first tranche phase out from passage of the Bill.</p>	<p>Supported in-principle.</p> <p>The Act will commence on 1 July 2021, with a transition that will focus on education rather than enforcement.</p>
<p><b>Exemptions for attached items / items integral to a product’s packaging</b> – industry require legal certainty that there will be an exemption for this type of item before they fully commit to implementation. This includes, for example, a fork included in packaging for a ready-made salad. These items are subject to national and international supply chains and are better dealt with via the National Waste Policy Action Plan’s targets related to phasing out problematic and unnecessary packaging by 2025.</p>	<p>Supported.</p> <p>A definition of an integrated packaging item, including examples, has been included in Part 2 Important Concepts of the introduced Bill.</p>
<p><b>Barrier bags</b> – Alternatives to barrier bags require extensive health and safety testing. This is particularly given the extremely high requirements for food safety as these items come into contact with fresh produce, meat and seafood and significant supply chain disruptions and shortages as a result of COVID-19. While</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The ACT Government will consult with affected stakeholders on barrier bags per the conditions set out in the Bill regarding regulation-making powers.</p>

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<p>compostable plastic alternatives may provide a solution, companies that could provide these at scale are very limited, which has potential anti-competitiveness implications.</p>	
<p><b>Align phase outs to organics collections services</b> – to prevent potentially adverse environmental outcomes associated such as increased landfilling and greenhouse gas emissions associated with organics disposal resulting from a mass switch to compostable alternatives, noting that closed-loop in-house organics collections systems are currently considered best practice.</p>	<p>Supported in-principle.</p> <p>Substitution will undoubtedly be necessary for some single-use plastic items. However, the intention of the Bill is to reduce plastic consumption and encourage avoidance entirely (where possible) rather than simply replacing one single-use item for another.</p> <p>The <a href="#">ACT Climate Change Strategy</a> and the <a href="#">Parliamentary and Governing Agreement</a> include commitments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• separate household collections for organic waste by 2023; and</li> <li>• a requirement that all businesses have separate collections for organics waste by 2023.</li> </ul> <p>This item is supported in-principle only as substitution is not the intention of the Bill, and services / requirements related to organics collection will not be at scale by the time the first tranche phase out commences.</p>