



PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

TRANSPORT CANBERRA AND
CITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE

SEPTEMBER 2019

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	4
SCOPE OF ENGAGEMENT	4
ENGAGEMENT ON PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS	5
WHO WE HEARD FROM AND HOW	7
HOW WE CONSIDERED RESPONSES	8
1. COLLECTING CONTRIBUTIONS	8
2. FILTERING, COLLATING AND WEIGHTING CONTRIBUTIONS	8
3. ANALYSING CONTRIBUTIONS	9
WHAT WE HEARD	10
SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS FROM THE ENGAGEMENT	10
DETAIL OF INSIGHTS FROM THE ENGAGEMENT	11
WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION	11
WHICH SINGLE-USE PLASTICS?	14
APPROACHES FOR ACT GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION	20
HOW WE CAN MAKE IT WORK	27
ON-GOING ENGAGEMENT	34
NEXT STEPS	35
APPENDICES	36
A SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS	36
B WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS	36
C SURVEY QUESTIONS	36

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Single-use plastics create challenges for our environment and waste management systems.

Community concern about plastic waste is at an all-time high. Internationally, across Australia and in the ACT, there is community pressure and an expectation that governments and companies must do more to address the issues and challenges associated with single-use plastic.

Between mid-April and the end of July 2019, the ACT Government consulted with industry, business and the community about ways to avoid and reduce the consumption of single-use plastics. This included considering whether certain categories of single-use plastics should be phased out or banned in the ACT.

With over 80 attendees at information sessions, 2,813 surveys completed and 432 submissions made from community, business and industry, interest in the consultation process was exceptionally high,

Feedback provided throughout the consultation has shown strong support from the community, business and industry to phase out unnecessary and problematic single-use plastic products, particularly when there are readily available alternatives.

There is a strong expectation amongst participants that the ACT Government will lead action to address this important issue. The consultation also identified that many individuals and businesses are already taking action, using innovative approaches to reducing their own plastic waste.

There are diverse views about which single-use plastic products are the most important to address. There is most support to phase out plastic products with readily available alternatives, including plastic straws and stirrers and disposable cutlery, plates and cups. The ACT Community is more ambitious than organisations, and wants to see action on a broader range of single-use plastics, including plastic packaging and plastic bags (e.g. produce bags and grocery check-out bags of over 35 microns).

It will be important to ensure that any phase out of single-use plastics considers individuals in the community that require ready access to single-use plastics (e.g. people living with a disability having access to plastic straws).

A combination of non-regulatory, intermediate and regulatory approaches to reduce single-use plastic products are supported by industry, business and the community. For example, a regulatory ban on selected plastic products supported by a public education campaign. Other suggestions include investing in improved recycling and infrastructure and the ACT Government driving innovation through incentives, community and business grants and investment in alternatives. There is also support for continued engagement with the Council of Australian Governments, and the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation, to develop a harmonised and, where possible, consistent approach to phasing out single-use plastics.

The ACT Government understands the importance of adopting a practical and evidence-based approach to considering a phase out of single-use plastics. Any proposed action needs to adequately consider alternatives, including their viability and associated lifecycle impacts. Industry, business and the community have also advised that the success of any future policy initiatives will be reliant on alternatives improving environmental outcomes and

avoiding unintended consequences. A transition period for industry and business will support them to efficiently and effectively respond to change.

Finally, it is important for the ACT Government to continue to engage with industry, business and the community, to ensure they remain active partners in taking action on single-use plastics.

INTRODUCTION

Plastic is an incredibly useful material, but in the wrong place plastic – particularly single-use plastic – can pollute and/or contaminate our local environment and waste treatment facilities.

Community concern about plastic waste is at an all-time high. Internationally, and across Australia, there is community pressure for governments and companies to do more to address the issues and challenges associated with single-use plastics.

Through the *Phasing out single-use plastics discussion paper*,¹ the ACT Government sought to consult broadly with industry, business and the community about ways to avoid and reduce our consumption of single-use plastics. This included considering whether certain categories of single-use plastics should be phased out or banned in the ACT.

Feedback from the community, business and industry have shown people support, and expect, the ACT Government to lead action on this important issue.

SCOPE OF ENGAGEMENT

The discussion paper outlined a number of problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic products for consideration. Commonly used products were suggested as being included or excluded from consideration (Figure 1). While the community and business surveys were designed to target feedback on included items, there were opportunities for feedback, through open response survey questions and through written submissions, on whether excluded items should be considered further.

¹ ACT Government (2019), *Phasing out single-use plastics discussion paper*, Transport Canberra and City Services, Canberra.

PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Figure 1: Single-use plastic products considered through the discussion paper²

 ✓ Plastic straws and stirrers	 ✗ Microbeads (already being phased out)
 ✓ Plastic cutlery	 ✗ Plastic beverage containers
 ✓ Disposable plastic plates and cups	 ✗ Other plastic packaging (e.g. food packaging, consumer goods)
 ✓ Disposable plastic-lined coffee cups and lids	 ✗ Sanitary items
 ✓ Polystyrene (foam) plastic food containers and beverage cups	 ✗ Nappies and incontinence products
 ✓ Light-weight fruit and vegetable bags	 ✗ Reusable plastic bags above 35 microns in thickness, including 'green bags', 'biodegradable' and 'compostable' bags
 ? Other non-recyclable plastics	 ✗ Health related sterile items (e.g. syringes)
	 ✗ Cotton buds

ENGAGEMENT ON PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

The ACT Government undertook extensive consultation in order to engage with industry, business and the community about problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic waste and pollution.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate led this effort over 15 weeks, between 16 April and 31 July 2019. This extended consultation period aimed to ensure there was adequate time for meaningful engagement across a broad range of stakeholders.

During the consultation period, the ACT Government invited people to comment on the *Phasing out single-use plastics discussion paper*. The discussion paper included information and a series of questions focused on:

- > identifying opportunities and ideas for phasing out specific problematic and unnecessary single-use plastics and moving to more sustainable alternatives, and
- > highlighting important considerations that would inform government decision-making, including:
 - potential impacts on manufacturers, importers and businesses that supply and use single-use plastics, and
 - consumer impacts, including social equity concerns and practicalities.

Feedback was sought in a number of ways, including:

² ACT Government (2019), *Phasing out single-use plastics discussion paper*, Transport Canberra and City Services, Canberra, p 21.

PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

- > Online surveys for the community and businesses,
- > Written submissions, including through the YourSay website,³
- > Community, business and government information sessions, and
- > Pop-up stalls across Canberra.

³ <https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au>

WHO WE HEARD FROM AND HOW

Peak industry and environment bodies, advocacy and political groups, governments, businesses and members of the general public engaged with the ideas in the discussion paper. There were considerable levels of participation, across the community, as evidenced by the number of written submissions and the number of individual responses to the surveys.

Detailed demographics for respondents to the community and business surveys is provided in Appendix A. A summary of consultation approaches is provided below.

Community survey	16 April – 31 July 2019	A total of 2,771 completed survey responses were received (purple figures).
Business survey	16 April – 31 July 2019	A total of 42 completed survey responses were received (blue figures).
Submissions	16 April – 31 July 2019	<p>A total of 412 community submissions were received through the YourSay website and by email. These range in size and complexity from single sentences to lengthy emailed submissions.</p> <p>An additional 20 submissions were received from peak industry and environment bodies, advocacy and political groups, businesses and government. These submissions are referred to as organisational submissions throughout this report. The list of contributors is provided at Appendix B.</p> <p>A copy of all written submissions will be made available on the YourSay website (grey figures).</p>
Information sessions	15 June – 11 July 2019	Five information sessions were held, including two business sessions, two community sessions and one government session. Over 80 people attended the community and business sessions.
Pop-up stalls	8 – 21 June 2019	Ten pop-up stalls were set-up in public places across Canberra to engage with the community about problematic and unnecessary single-use plastics.
Presentations	4 June – 23 July 2019	Four additional presentations were delivered at community council meetings and Australian Government departments.
Social media	17 April – 31 July 2019	ACT Government created 18 social media posts to promote the discussion paper.

HOW WE CONSIDERED RESPONSES

As outlined above, the ACT Government aimed to consult broadly and take account of all suggestions received. The following approach was used to analyse responses.

1. COLLECTING CONTRIBUTIONS

Consultation occurred through a range of events, online promotions, presentations and distribution of printed materials. Contributions were collected in a number of ways including through online surveys for the community and businesses, written submissions, community, business and government information sessions and at pop-up stalls across Canberra.

2. FILTERING, COLLATING AND WEIGHTING CONTRIBUTIONS

Community surveys

The community survey asked 16 questions relating to the themes outlined above. Survey questions are included at Appendix C. A total of 3,045 community surveys were started, of which 2,771 surveys were completed. Completed survey responses were analysed further to inform this report.

A large number of people participated in the community survey. The demographic information collected through the community survey identified that the community survey respondents were not reflective of the ACT's population (e.g. more women completed the survey than men).

Due to the differences in the gender and age of the community respondents when compared to the ACT population, results were weighted based on the age and gender of respondents. This aimed to ensure, as far as possible, that the survey results were more likely to represent the views of the community, including people who were less likely to complete the survey.

Business surveys

The business survey asked 17 questions relating to the themes outlined above. Survey questions are included at Appendix C. A total of 102 business surveys were started, of which 42 surveys were completed. Completed survey responses were analysed further to inform this report.

The smaller number of responses to the business survey mean these results are unlikely to represent the range of views held by local businesses on single-use plastics. While this feedback is useful for understanding the opportunities and challenges of phasing out single-use plastics for business owners and operators, additional consultation on proposed ACT Government policy responses may be required.

Written submissions

Written submissions received through the YourSay website and email were filtered to consolidate comments that were known to be from a single contributor and to remove comments that were not relevant to the discussion paper analysis (e.g. requests for further information, suggestions unrelated to the phasing out single-use plastics discussion paper).

Written contributions were separated into two datasets; community submissions and organisational submissions:

- > **Community submissions** were considered to be submissions received through the YourSay website or by email from an individual or family,⁴ and
- > **Organisational submissions** were considered to be submissions received from peak industry and environment bodies, advocacy and political groups, businesses and government.

Community submissions and organisational submissions were analysed separately.⁵

Information sessions

Five information sessions were held between 15 June and 11 July 2019. This included two community sessions, two business sessions and one government session. Feedback from the information sessions was captured in minutes by Transport Canberra and City Services officers. This information was used to inform a high level summary of the themes raised in each session.

Pop-up stalls

Ten pop-up stalls were set-up in public places across Canberra, between 8 and 21 June 2019, to engage with the community about problematic and unnecessary single-use plastics. Pop-up stalls provided information about the phasing out single-use plastic discussion paper and allowed participants to vote on which single-use plastics they thought should be phased-out in the ACT. Due to the large number of community survey responses about phasing out single-use plastic products, votes from pop-up stalls were not considered further in the consultation analysis for this report.

3. ANALYSING CONTRIBUTIONS

Survey results and submissions were collated and analysed to classify individual feedback into broader themes and considerations for ACT Government, including:

- > whether action on single-use plastics was considered important and would be supported,
- > which single-use plastic products should be considered,
- > potential impacts, challenges and considerations associated with phasing out single-use plastics,
- > preferred approaches and timeframes for phasing-out single use plastics,
- > voluntary approaches already adopted by individuals and businesses to reduce their consumption of single-use plastics, and
- > other suggestions for the ACT Government to consider.

⁴ Written submissions received through the YourSay website were considered to be community submissions from a private individual, regardless of whether it was known that that individual is also affiliated with a government or business organisation.

⁵ Community and organisational submissions were analysed separately to ensure the views of organisational contributors were adequately considered. This was considered appropriate as organisational submissions account for only 4 per cent of all written submissions. Had all written submissions been analysed together, a community submission comprised of a single sentence would have been given the same weight as a substantial submission by a peak industry body.

WHAT WE HEARD

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS FROM THE ENGAGEMENT

We need to take action

1. Single-use plastics create challenges for our environment and waste management systems, and there is overwhelming support for action to avoid and reduce the consumption of single-use plastics.
2. People and businesses are voluntarily taking action to reduce their consumption of single-use plastic products. They want active support from the ACT Government to address the challenges associated with making this change.

Which single-use plastics?

3. There are diverse views amongst industry, business and the community about which single-use plastics are the most important to address.
4. There is most support for action on single-use plastics with readily available alternatives, including plastic straws and stirrers, and disposable cutlery, plates and cups.
5. The community is more ambitious than organisations and wants action on a broader range of single-use plastics, including plastic packaging and plastic bags (e.g. produce bags, check-out bags over 35 microns).

Approaches for ACT Government intervention

6. A combination of non-regulatory, intermediate and regulatory approaches is needed to reduce single-use plastics.
7. There is broad support for non-regulatory approaches, including providing public education, engaging through the Council of Australian Governments to ensure a harmonised and, where possible, consistent approach to phasing out single-use plastics across Australia, and by continuing to support the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation.
8. The ACT Government should lead by example and support action using a range of intermediate approaches, including driving innovation through incentives and investment in alternatives (e.g. through ACT Government procurement processes and action in its directorates) and by investing in local infrastructure to support action on single-use plastics.
9. There is broad support amongst the community, and from some industry and business groups, for regulatory action, including bans, mandating the use of alternatives, and introducing taxes on single-use plastic products.
10. Any intervention must consider individuals in the community that require ready access to single-use plastics (e.g. people living with a disability continuing to have access to plastic straws).

How we can make it work

11. ACT Government must adopt a considered, practical and evidence-based approach to introduce viable alternatives and effectively phase out single-use plastics. Any proposed action needs to adequately consider alternatives, including their viability and associated lifecycle impacts, before taking action.
12. ACT Government needs to provide information for the community and businesses on how to reduce the impact of single-use plastics, including which alternatives they should use, where they can source them and how to reuse and recycle plastic.
13. There needs to be a transition period for industry and businesses to efficiently and effectively respond to change without unintended consequences.

On-going engagement

14. ACT Government needs to continue to engage with industry, business and the community to ensure they remain active partners in taking action on single-use plastics.

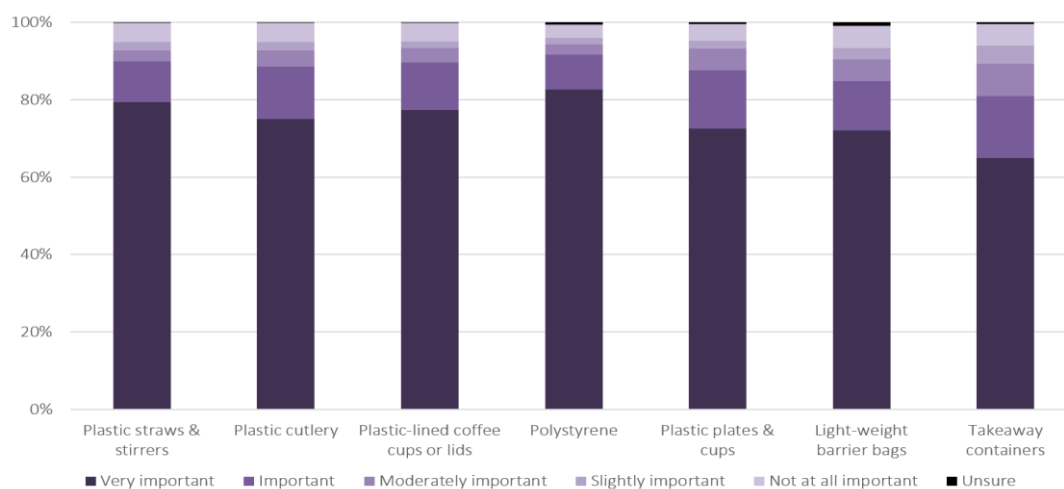
DETAIL OF INSIGHTS FROM THE ENGAGEMENT

WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION

There is overwhelming support for action on single-use plastics.

Over 90 per cent of community survey respondents think action on plastic straws and stirrers, plastic-lined coffee cups or lids, and polystyrene containers and cups, is either very important or important (Figure 2). Over 80 per cent of community survey respondents think action on plastic cutlery, plastic plates and cups, light-weight fruit and vegetable barrier bags, and takeaway containers, is either very important or important.

Figure 2: Community survey – importance of taking action on common single-use plastic products⁶



This level of support for action on single-use plastic was also reflected through the written submissions:

- > over 90 per cent of community submissions support action on single-use plastics,⁷ while 6 per cent either do not support action on single-use plastics, or think the ACT Government should be focused on other issues (e.g. climate change), and
- > 85 per cent of organisational submissions support action on single-use plastics, while 5 per cent do not support ACT Government action on single-use plastic.

“Fully support this initiative and applaud the ACT Govt for this action”

“Action is needed right now”

“I am excited to see the ACT Government taking action in this area”

“Thanks for taking action on single use plastics”

“Decisions on the use of single-use plastics should be left to the market place”

⁶ Community survey response to “How important is it for the ACT Government to take action in reducing the following products in our community?” (Question 3).

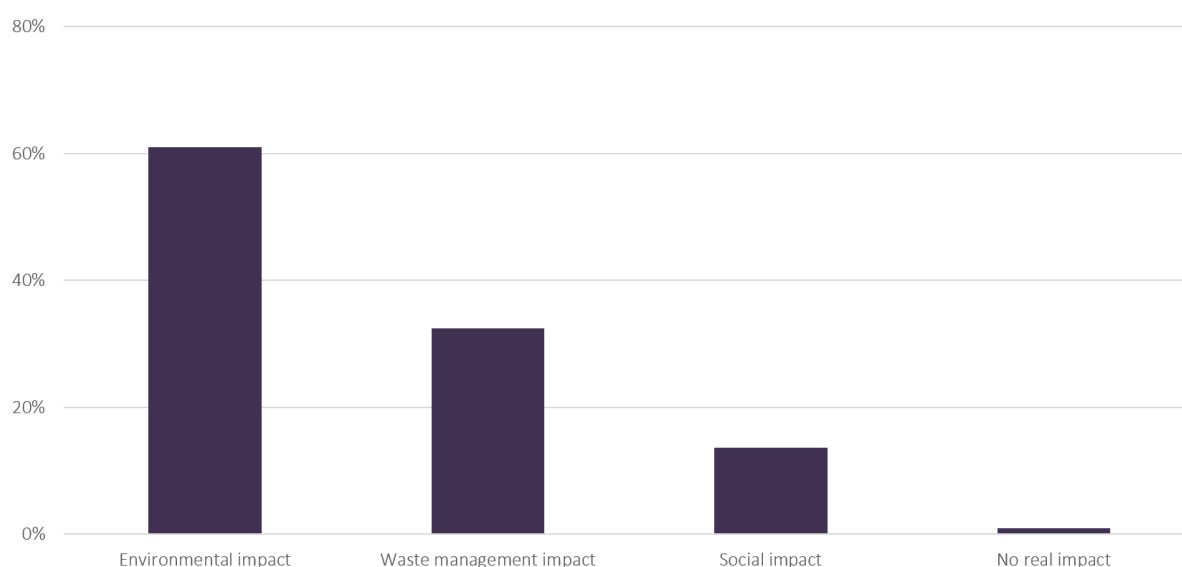
⁷ This includes 8 per cent of community submissions that provided a caveated support for action (e.g. that implementation activities consider the needs of people living with disabilities).

Drivers for taking action

Of the community survey respondents who think action on single-use plastics is very important or important, the main driver for change is the environmental impact of single-use plastics (Figure 3). Of the respondents who provided information about what they consider to be the most significant impacts of single-use plastics consumption:

- > over 60 per cent of respondents were concerned about environmental impacts, including the effect of pollution, litter and resource use on ecosystems, wildlife, local waterways and the food chain;
- > over 30 per cent of respondents were concerned about waste management impacts, including landfill and the cost of waste disposal;
- > 14 per cent of respondents were concerned about the social impacts, including encouraging wasteful behaviour, shifting the burden of waste disposal to other countries and intergenerational impacts; and
- > 1 per cent of respondents consider there to be no real impact.

Figure 3: Community survey – significant impacts of single-use plastic products⁸



"The amount of plastic waste in our water ways, nature strips and bushland"

"Harm to environment and wildlife, whether in ACT or wherever the ACT's rubbish ends up"

"Ends up in landfill and as micro plastics in our soil. We need to find a way to reprocess plastics so that we do not end up with stock piles and/or rely on other countries to deal our waste"

"Clogging up landfills with materials that don't breakdown"

"Above all, they perpetuate the mindset of wastefulness and a detachment from its consequences"

"Normalises a wasteful approach to life"

"We are destroying the entire Planet. I want my grandchildren to have a future"

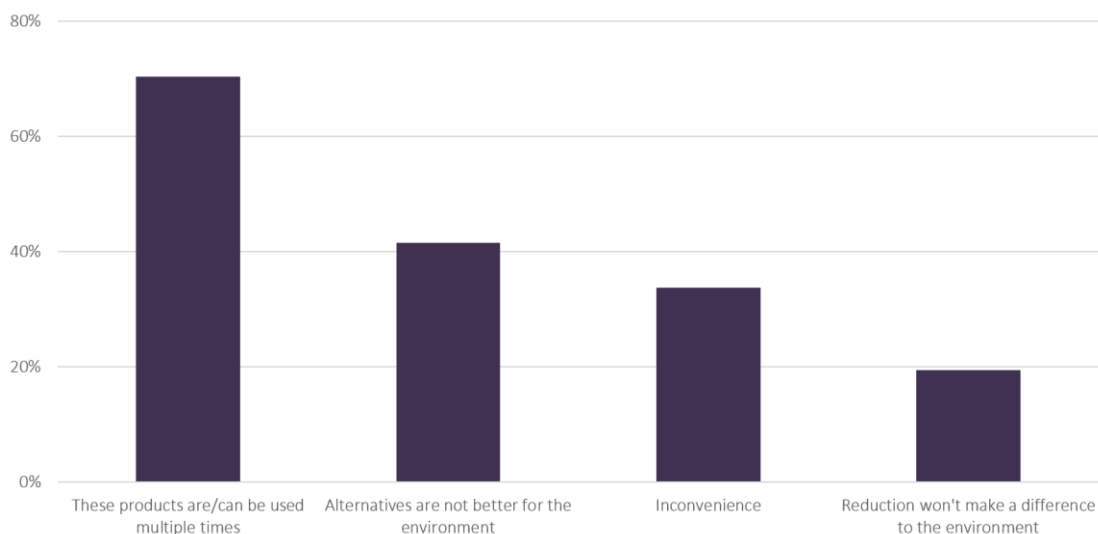
⁸ Community survey response to "What do you believe is the most significant impact of single-use plastic in the ACT?" (Question 11).

Reasons for not thinking action is important

Of the community survey respondents who thought action on single-use plastics was only slightly important or not at all important (Figure 4):

- > 70 per cent of respondents think single-use products can and should be used multiple times, and
- > over 40 per cent of respondents do not think alternatives are better for the environment.

Figure 4: Community survey - reasons for not considering action on single-use plastic to be important⁹



"I don't believe this is something the government needs to be involved in"

"Let people make their own choice to reduce their plastic consumption"

"Banning problematic single use plastics in the ACT will have a negligible impact on the global environment"

"No plastic is 'single use'. All plastic can be recycled"

⁹ Community survey response to "If you answered above that it is only 'Slightly important' or 'Not at all important' for the ACT Government to take action to reduce the usage of any of these products, can you please tell us why?" (Question 4).

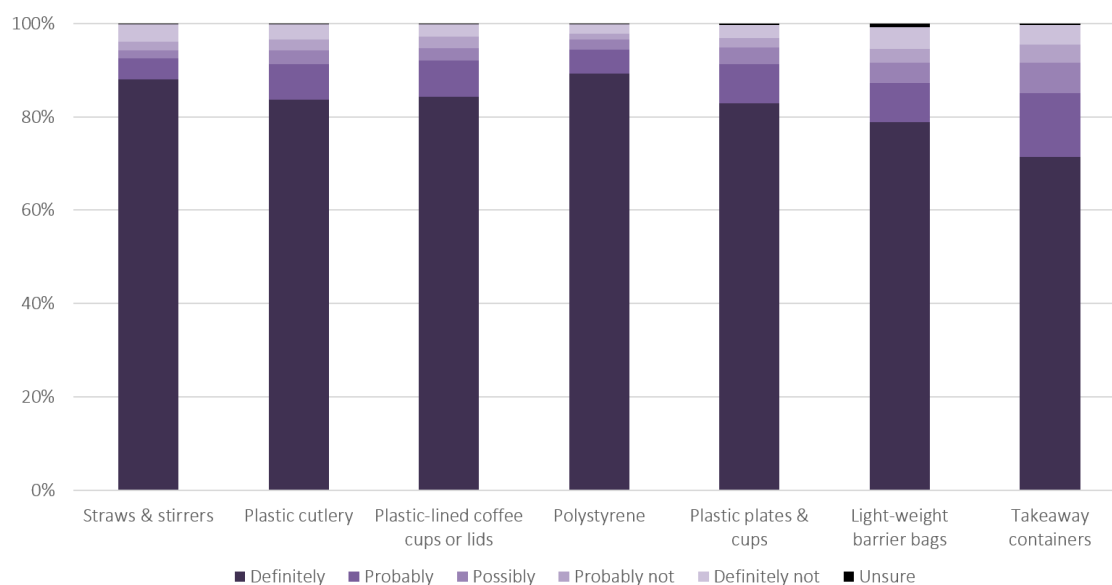
WHICH SINGLE-USE PLASTICS?

There is broad support amongst survey respondents and written submissions to phase out the single-use plastics included in the discussion paper.

Community support

Over 90 per cent of community survey respondents said they would definitely or probably support a phase out of polystyrene, straws and stirrers, plastic-lined coffee cups or lids, plastic cutlery, and plastic plates and cups (Figure 5). Over 85 per cent of community survey respondents said they would definitely or probably support a phase out of light-weight fruit and vegetable barrier bags and takeaway food containers.

Figure 5: Community survey - support for phasing out common single-use plastic products¹⁰



Phasing out the items included in the discussion paper was also supported through the community submissions, with 35 per cent of submissions specifically recommending action on these products.

Importantly, people want consideration for individuals living with a disability to ensure they have access to single-use plastic products, specifically straws. Considerations for people living with a disability is discussed further under the section on approaches for ACT Government intervention.

"The availability of single use plastics in the ACT encourages people to use them"

"Please phase them out, people will adjust!"

"I fully support the elimination of the use of single-use plastics"

"Get rid of all single use plastics. I don't want them!"

"I support the banning of single-use plastics in the ACT. We led the way with the plastic bag ban and the population adapted"

"Phase single use plastics out. The market will find better environmentally replacements, it just needs a push"

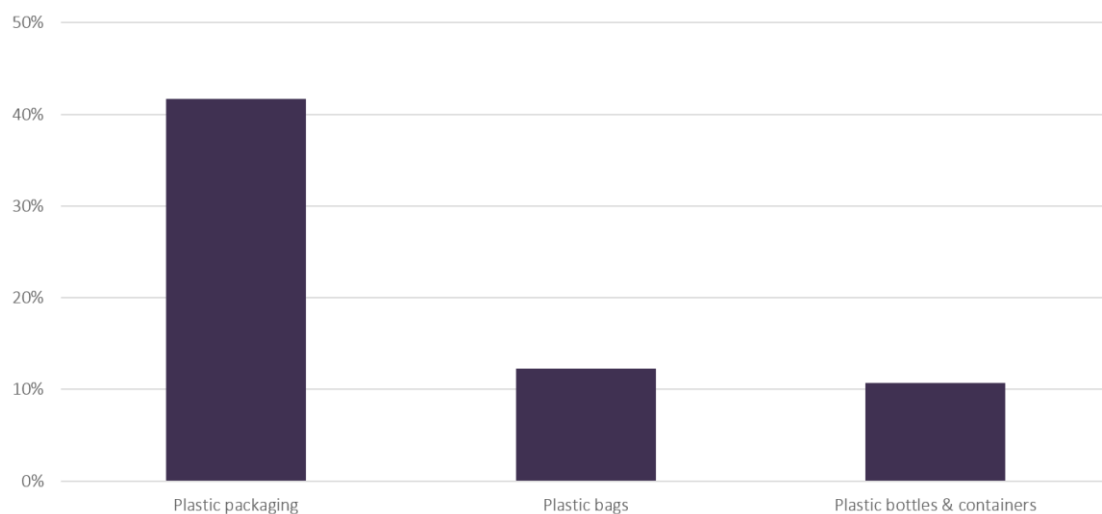
¹⁰ Community survey response to "How likely are you to support phasing out the following products?" (Question 5).

PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

In addition to the items considered for inclusion in the discussion paper, 70 per cent of community survey respondents want the ACT Government to take action on additional types of single-use plastics. Of the respondents who nominated other single-use plastic products for further consideration (Figure 6):

- > over 40 per cent want action to eliminate or reduce plastic packaging (e.g. food packaging in supermarkets and excess packaging on commercial products),
- > 12 per cent want action on plastic bags, including reusable grocery check-out bags weighing over 35 microns, and
- > 11 per cent want action to reduce the use of plastic bottles and containers.

Figure 6: Community survey - support for phasing out excluded single-use plastic products¹¹



“Less packaging on fruit and vegetables”

“If I want to buy organic produce at supermarkets I have no choice as to buy produce packaged in plastics”

“Reduction in packaging from retailers is VITAL. Not just fast foods”

“Stop selling ‘reusable’ plastic bags, ban plastic bags all together”

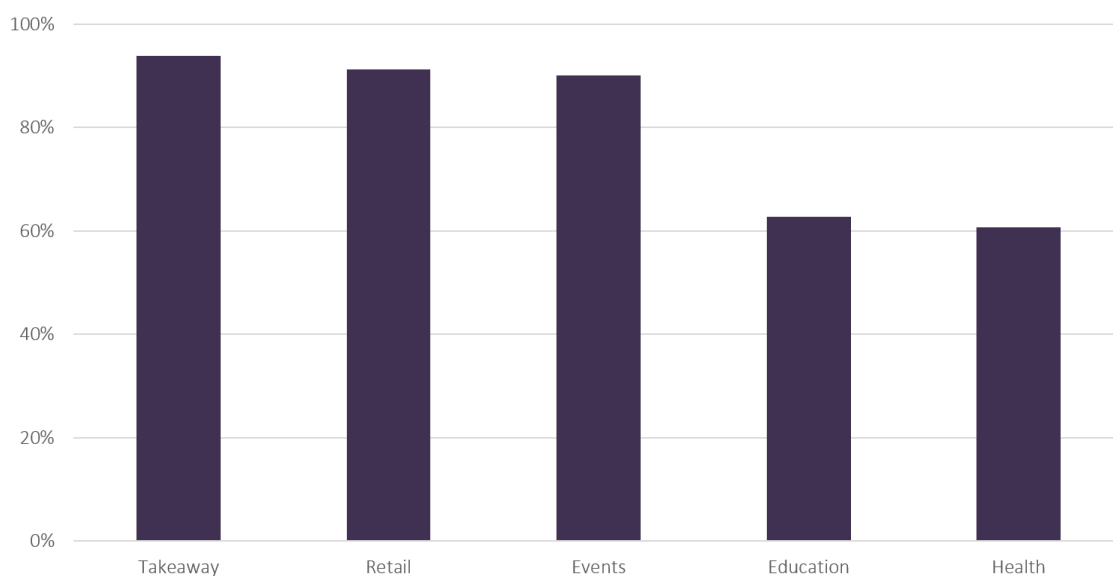
“[Ban] the sale of single use water bottles”

¹¹ Community survey response to “Are there any other single-use plastic products that the ACT Government, business and communities should be looking at?” (Question 13).

PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Ninety-five per cent of community survey respondents provided information about which sectors they think have an issue with single-use plastics (Figure 7). Based on these responses, community respondents are most concerned about single-use plastics used in fast food and takeaway (94 per cent), supermarkets and retail (91 per cent), and events (90 per cent). Over 60 per cent of respondents are also concerned about single-use plastics in hospitals and educational institutions.

Figure 7: Community survey – sectors that the community thinks have issues with single-use plastics^{12,13}



“A scheme to reuse containers for food delivery... That's our biggest plastic guilt at the moment”

“Educate retailers to not offer disposable items... get them to flip the default and ask customers if they have their own bag/cup, to shift norms about consumption”

“Hospitals produce way too much”

“The Government should set an example with publicly funded events such as the multicultural festival, floriade and enlighten to be single-use plastic free”

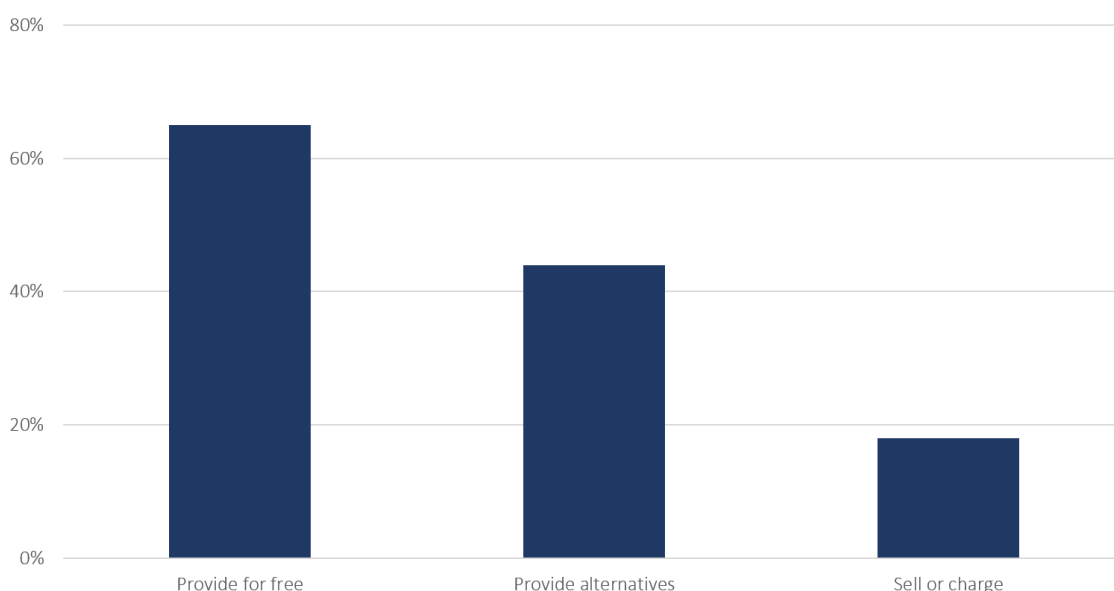
¹² Community survey response to “Do you believe single-use plastics is an issue at any of the following?” (Question 12).

¹³ This community survey question asked respondents to choose their top sectors of concern.

Business support

A number of business respondents who participated in the survey in the ACT sell or provide single-use plastic products (Figure 8). Nineteen per cent of business survey respondents do not sell or provide any type of single-use plastic product. Of the businesses that do sell or provide single-use plastic products, 65 per cent provide them for free, 44 per cent provide alternatives and 18 per cent sell or charge for them.

Figure 8: Business survey – sale and provision of single-use plastic products¹⁴



Respondents to the business survey support phasing out single-use plastics (Figure 9).

Over 80 per cent of business respondents either definitely or probably support a phase out of all single-use plastic products included in the discussion paper. There is most support for action on polystyrene and plastic straws and stirrers.

However, a number of business respondents that support a phase out of particular single-use plastic products do not sell or provide those products.

Of the business respondents that do not support a phase out of single-use plastic products:

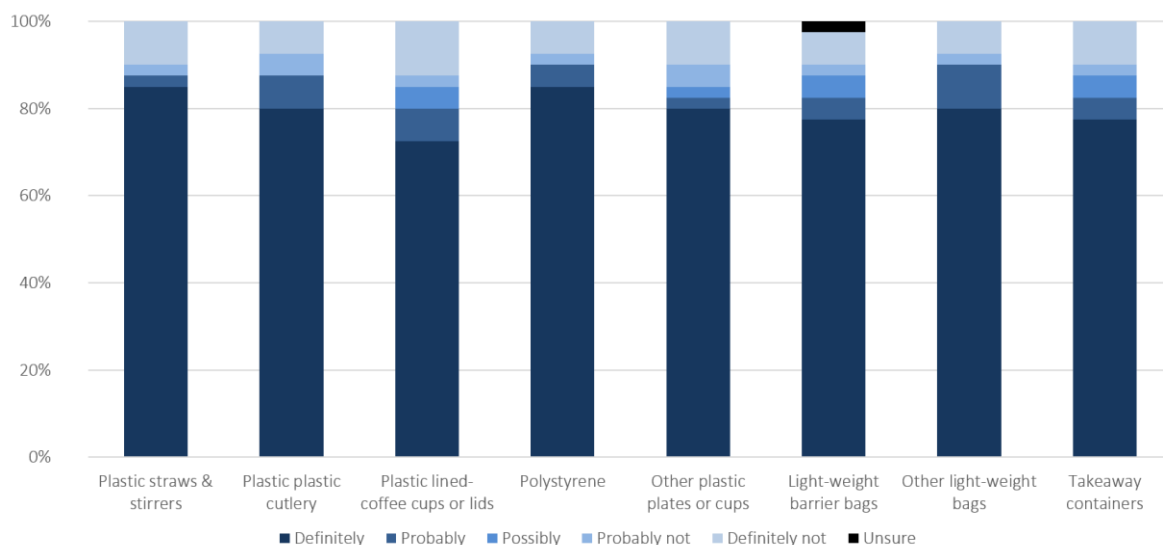
- > 45 per cent are concerned about impacts to their business, and
- > 18 per cent are concerned about impacts to their customers.

Other reasons for business respondents not supporting a phase out of single-use plastics include concerns about, health and hygiene, the need for improved recycling arrangements and concern about the viability of alternatives.

¹⁴ Business survey response to “Does your business sell or provide any of the following single-use plastic disposable products?” (Question 4).

PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Figure 9: Business survey - support for phasing out common single-use plastic products¹⁵



The small number of survey responses from businesses that actually use or supply particular single-use plastic products mean it will be important to engage further with local businesses on the potential impacts and challenges associated with phasing out these products. The importance of carefully considering impacts to business, especially small business, has been raised by peak industry groups through the organisational submissions.

"Phasing out avoidable plastics and toxic/harmful plastics will help stimulate alternative goods to be sought and mainstreamed"

"We need a stimulus for change and strong leadership from Government"

"Please do neither, don't ban single use plastics"

Industry support

Peak industry groups generally support action on single-use plastics with readily available alternatives, including plastic straws and stirrers, and disposable cutlery, plates and cups. However, organisational submissions highlight the importance of carefully considering alternatives to single-use plastics to inform ACT Government decision-making. Thirty-five per cent of organisational submissions highlight the importance of carefully considering the impact of change to business. This includes impacts to employees who often have to deal with negative feedback from consumers once change occurs.

"Retailers and their staff have been at the coalface of change, enduring consumer resistance and opposition especially during the first months [of bans]."

"Why is it on the businesses to make the call and explain it to customer? If it is a government priority then they should just do it and then it's easier to explain the reason"

¹⁵ Business survey response to "As a business owner, how likely are you to support a phasing-out of the following products?" (Question 6).

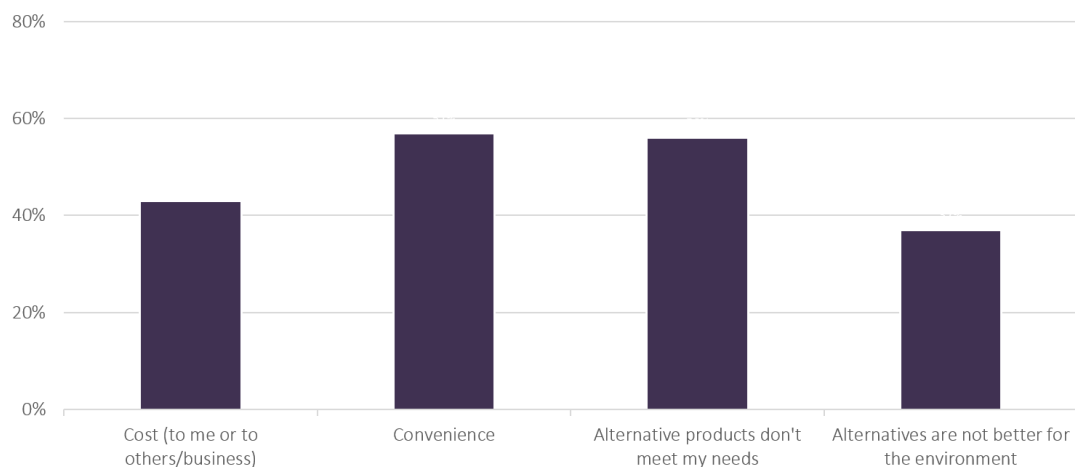
PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Barriers to phasing out single-use plastics

The community and business surveys identified a number of barriers to phasing out single-use plastic products in the ACT. Of the community survey respondents that probably or definitely did not support phasing out single-use plastics:

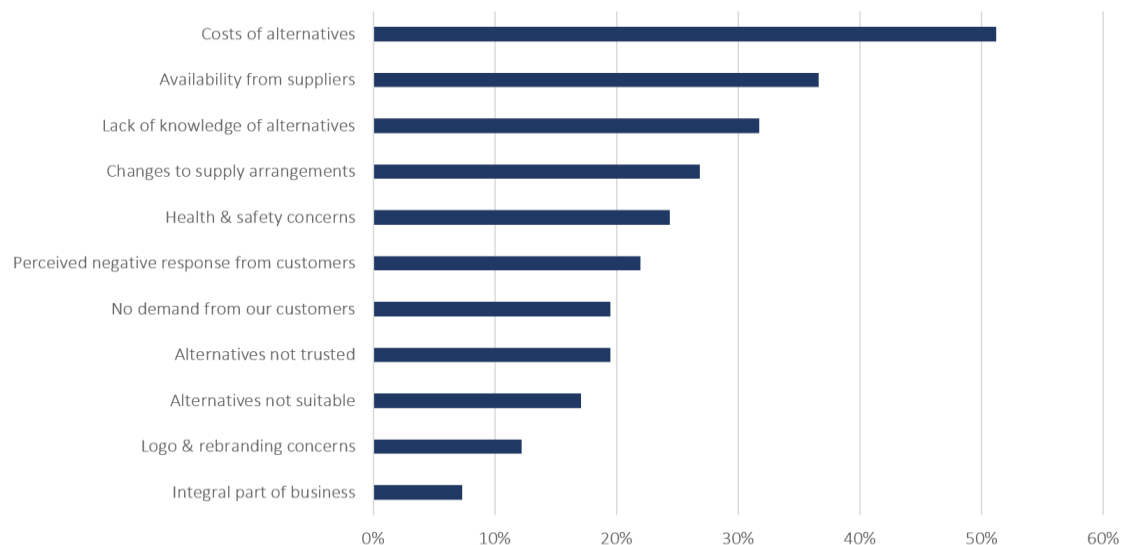
- > over 50 per cent think using single-use plastics is convenient and/or are concerned that alternative products do not meet their needs, and
- > over 40 per cent are concerned about the cost, to themselves or others (including businesses), of phasing out single-use plastics (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Community survey - reasons for not supporting a phase out of single-use plastics¹⁶



Over 50 per cent of business survey respondents cited the cost of alternatives as a barrier to phasing out single-use plastics (Figure 11). Business respondents were also concerned about the viability and availability of alternatives, changes to existing business arrangements and impacts to their customers.

Figure 11: Business survey - barriers to providing alternatives to single-use plastic products¹⁷



¹⁶ Community survey response to "If you answered above that you are 'Definitely not' or 'Probably not' likely to support phasing out any of these products, can you please tell us why?" (Question 6).

¹⁷ Business survey response to "What are some of the barriers for reducing single-use plastics for your business?" (Question 11).

APPROACHES FOR ACT GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Feedback from the community, business and industry indicates that a range of non-regulatory, intermediate and regulatory approaches are supported to deliver a phase out of single-use plastic products in the ACT.

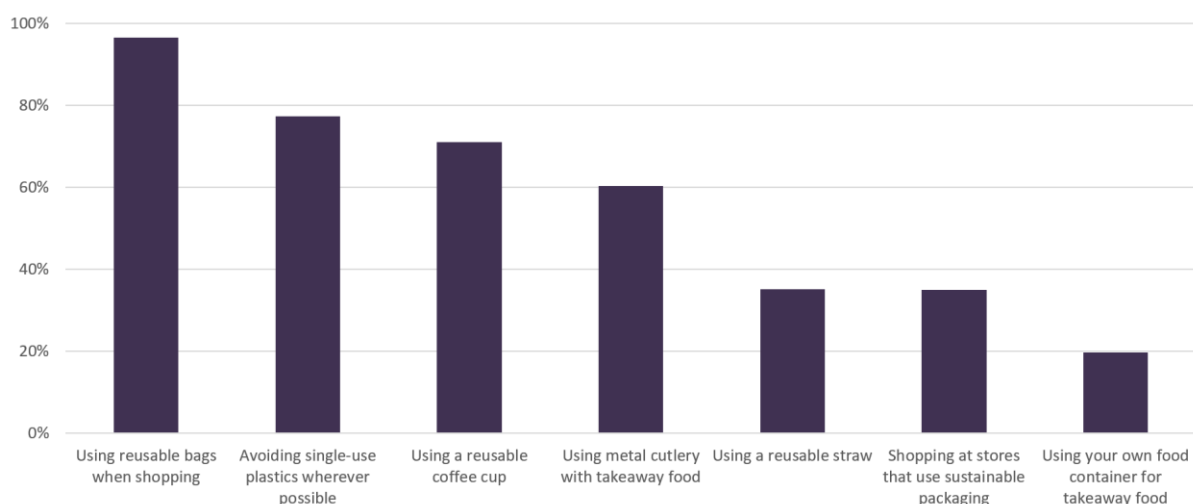
Importantly, the a number of people in the community and local businesses are already actively deciding to limit their consumption of single-use plastic products. Feedback through the surveys and written submissions has indicated that ACT Government interventions should actively support the community and businesses to further reduce the impact of single-use plastics.

Current approaches to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic

A number of individuals in the community are already taking action to reduce their consumption of single-use plastics (Figure 12). The community survey found:

- > over 95 per cent of respondents use re-useable plastic bags when shopping,
- > over 75 per cent of respondents avoid using single-use plastics wherever possible, and
- > over 70 per cent of respondents use a reusable coffee cup.

Figure 12: Community survey – current approaches to reduce consumption of single-use plastics¹⁸



These trends are supported by the community submissions. Of the submissions that provided information about how they are trying to reduce their consumption of plastic:

- > almost 80 per cent use reusable alternatives (e.g. cups, straws, cutlery), and
- > over 50 per cent actively vary their consumer habits (e.g. refusing to purchase products with plastic packaging, supporting local businesses that provide alternatives).

¹⁸ Community survey response to “Are you currently doing any of the following?” (Question 10).

PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

"For years I have been reducing our family's (5 people) waste. Our weekly landfill waste is the size of a soccer ball"

"I take my own sturdy (reusable) plastic containers to weekend markets"

"Avoid supermarkets/purchases where items like fruit and veg are unnecessarily covered in plastic"

"I take my own bags, and don't use small plastic bags for fruits/vegetables"

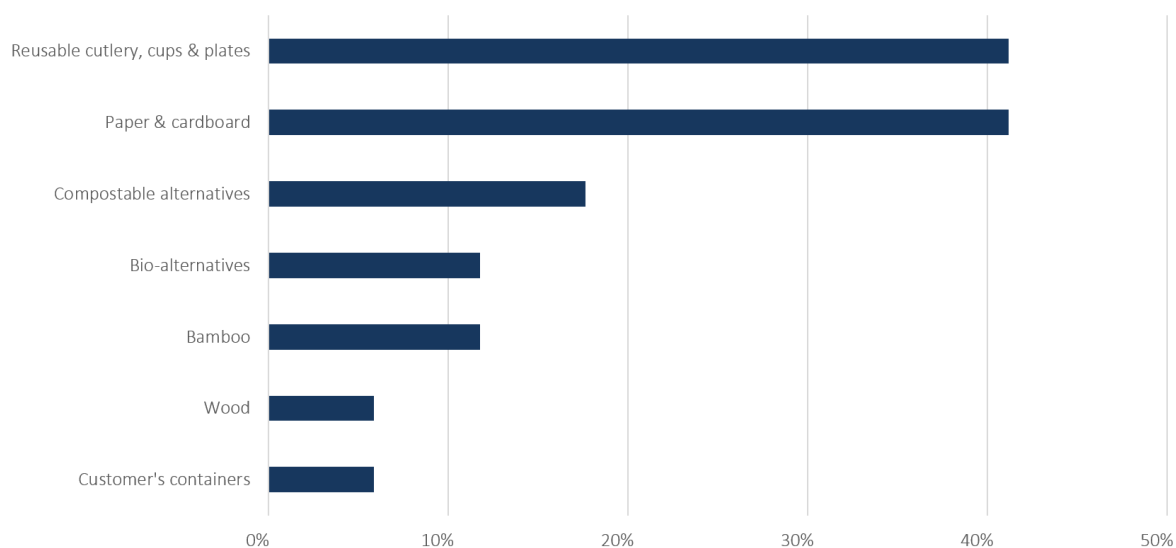
"I have been using 'compostable' plastic bags as bin liners. I might try lining bin with newspaper or even nothing!"

Industry and business groups are also taking action to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic products. Thirty-five per cent of organisational submissions provided examples of where either they, or their members, are voluntarily reducing single-use plastic products, including:

- > voluntarily phasing out problematic plastics in product packaging,
- > actively supporting the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation's National Packaging Targets,
- > changing the design of products to limit the use of plastic,
- > developing best-practice standards and educational material for businesses and the community about how to appropriately use and dispose of single-use plastic products,
- > influencing consumer habits through community information and messaging, and
- > introducing collection points for soft plastics to encourage reuse and recycling.

Over 35 per cent of business survey respondents provide alternatives to single-use plastics (Figure 13). Of the respondents that provide alternatives, the most popular alternatives are reusable cutlery, cups and plates, and alternatives made from paper and cardboard.

Figure 13: Business survey - alternatives currently provided by ACT businesses¹⁹

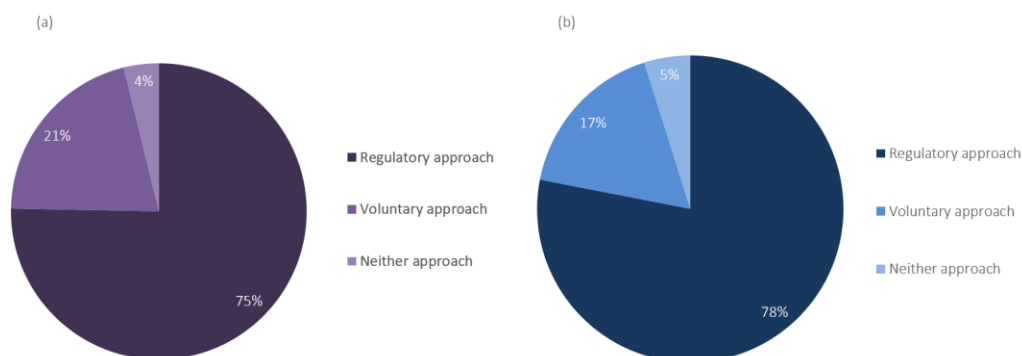


¹⁹ Business survey response to "If you answered 'alternatives' for any of the products listed above, please tell us what alternatives you are using." (Question 5).

Support for ACT Government intervention

Over 95 per cent of community survey respondents think regulatory or voluntary approaches would be the most effective way to get them to reduce their consumption of single-use plastic products (Figure 14a). Similarly, 95 per cent of business survey respondents would prefer a regulatory or voluntary approach to phasing out single-use plastic (Figure 14b). Five per cent or less of respondents from both the community and business surveys support neither approach.

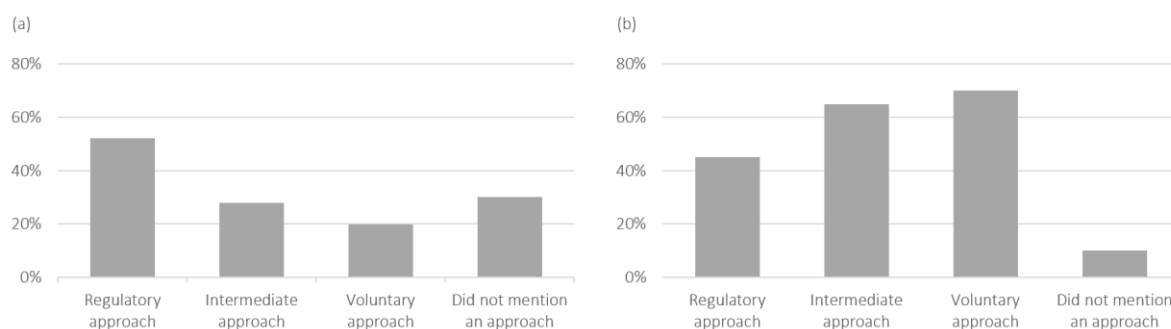
Figure 14: Community (a)²⁰ and business (b)²¹ surveys - support for regulatory and voluntary approaches



Amongst the community survey respondents, there is most support for regulatory approaches from people who also think action on single-use plastics is very important. Respondents who think action on single-use plastics is possibly important are more likely to support voluntary approaches. Respondents who think action on single-use plastics is slightly important or definitely not important are more likely to not support either approach.

The written submissions highlighted support for a combination of approaches to phase out single-use plastic products (Figure 15). While the community and business surveys asked respondents to select their most preferred approach, written submissions allowed people to suggest multiple approaches. As a result, written submissions often recommended the ACT Government adopt a combination of approaches (e.g. a regulatory ban supported by a public education campaign).

Figure 15: Community (a) and organisational (b) submissions - preferred approaches for phasing out single-use plastics



²⁰ Community survey response to "What phase-out approach would be most effective in reducing your usage/consumption of single-use plastic products?" (Question 7).

²¹ Business survey response to "What phase-out approach would you prefer?" (Question 9).

Voluntary approaches

There is support amongst the community, business and industry respondents for voluntary approaches to phasing out single-use plastic products. Over 20 per cent of community survey respondents, and 17 per cent of business survey respondents, support voluntary approaches (Figure 14).

There is also support for voluntary approaches in written submissions (Figure 15). The most recommended voluntary approaches include the ACT Government:

- > providing public education for the community and local business,
- > engaging through the Council of Australian Governments to ensure a harmonised and, where possible, consistent approach to phasing out single-use plastics across Australia, and
- > continuing to support the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation.

Through the business information sessions, it was suggested that policy approaches could also consider international standards to harmonise approaches for multi-national corporations.

Of note, 10 per cent of organisational submissions do not support any regulatory approach to phasing out single-use plastics. Rather, these submissions recommended that the ACT Government rely on voluntary approaches that support businesses to innovate while they respond to consumer demands to reduce the impact of single-use plastics.

"[Businesses need] a consistent approach across the states and across all types of businesses in an effort to reduce complexity, increase consumer understanding, and to produce targeted and consistent communications."

"[We] encourage State and Territory governments to work together on nationally consistent measures"

"The government needs to have an agreement with the producers of single use plastics to change the products they produce"

"A combination... Make a voluntary change over a few months, then enforced gradually over time"

Intermediate approaches

Over 25 per cent of community submissions, and 60 per cent of organisational submissions, recommend the ACT Government leads by example to implement a range of intermediate approaches (Figure 15), including:

- > driving innovation through incentives and investment in alternatives (e.g. through ACT Government grants and procurement processes, and through action in ACT Government directorates, including public hospitals),
- > investing in local infrastructure to reduce the impacts of single-use plastics, including improved recycling facilities, more recycling bins (e.g. in food courts) and more water refill stations,
- > setting targets for local business, and
- > promoting and supporting more plastic free events.

“The purchasing power of combined Canberra businesses and government should be leveraged when dealing with suppliers of alternative products, rather than forcing individual firms to ‘go it alone’ in a sea of products. Give them guidance and real support”

“I think more investment needs to be made in recycling and manufacturing technology to best recover recyclables from the existing waste streams”

“You need to put more water taps around so I don’t have to buy a new bottle of water when I’m out and finish the water in my drink bottle”

“[We] need some group grant money for small businesses”

Regulatory approaches

Over 75 per cent of community and business survey respondents support a regulatory approach to phasing out single-use plastic products (Figure 14).

Community submissions also prefer regulatory approaches to phasing out single-use plastics (Figure 15a). Over 50 per cent of community submissions recommended the ACT Government introduce legislation to:

- > ban single-use plastic products (37 per cent),
- > introduce a tax on single-use plastics (8 per cent), and
- > mandate the use of alternatives (17 per cent).

A number of community submissions note the importance of effective compliance and enforcement activities to ensure any new laws were effective.

Forty per cent of organisational submissions support a regulatory approach to phasing out single-use plastics (Figure 15b). However, organisational submissions are more supportive of voluntary and intermediate approaches than regulatory approaches.

“Just ban it and teach people why”

“Tax single use plastics and subsidize eco friendly alternatives”

“Charging much higher prices for plastic bags, e.g. \$3 rather than 10c”

“Plastics that are not able to be composted should be restricted with a view to ceasing demand and manufacture”

“Money and positions should be put into enforcement and penalties should be significant for those that flout the new laws”

Consideration for people living with disabilities

The ACT Government will need to ensure people living with disabilities continue to have access to the single-use products they need.

A number of community survey respondents and written submissions raised the importance of single-use plastics remaining available for people living with disabilities, and for some other groups in the community (e.g. elderly people). The most commonly mentioned single-use plastic product was straws:

- > 20 per cent of community survey respondents, who are either probably or definitely not supportive of phasing out single-use plastic, cite impacts to people living with disabilities, and
- > 30 per cent of organisational submissions and 8 per cent of community submissions, recommend the ACT Government consider approaches to ensure people living with disabilities are not impacted.

A number of written submissions, including two organisational submissions from disability advocacy groups, highlighted that current alternatives to single-use plastic are considered to be unusable, high risk and dangerous for people living with disabilities, particularly those with high support needs.

There is concern that phasing out single-use plastic straws will require people with disabilities to carry their own straws. Advocates have indicated restricting access to plastic straws creates social equity issues, including:

- > financial impacts that disproportionately and adversely affect people living with a disability, many of whom already experience financial hardship, and
- > privacy and inclusion issues, where people with disabilities may need to prove a medical necessity to access single-use plastic straws.

A number of written submissions include suggestions to remove or limit these impacts. These suggestions will be carefully considered by the ACT Government to inform future policy responses.

“Alternative products do not meet the needs of some disabled people”

“Providing accessibility for people living with a disability is maintained (e.g. allowing plastic straws), then I 100% agree with phasing out single-use plastics”

“Removing and banning plastic straws effectively bans people with a disability who rely on straws to be able to eat and drink in public”

“If you just want to get a coffee or a cold drink, do you want to give the barista your medical history? A person should not be required to do that”

“Bans on plastic straws are regressive, not progressive”

“ACT Government... [needs to] consider how to cultivate accessible and hospitable environments that champion inclusion while also reducing waste”

HOW WE CAN MAKE IT WORK

Consideration of alternatives

Written submissions highlight the importance of the ACT Government adopting a practical and evidence-based approach to considering viable alternatives, in order to effectively phase out single-use plastics.

A number of submissions highlight the importance of research into alternatives, including their viability and life-cycle impacts, to ensure they result in improved environmental outcomes and do not result in unintended consequences. While the community members who responded to the discussion paper support change, a number of people note change will only be successful if single-use plastic products can be replaced with better alternatives.

"In order for Canberra to become a leader in the space of phasing out single use plastics, we need to provide alternatives that are well thought through, tested and accepted by Canberra consumers, cost effective for businesses to provide, and most importantly do not increase their environmental footprint compared to the plastic items they are replacing"

Organisational submissions note it will be important to consider interdependencies with Government standards (e.g. health standards and the requirements of the National Measurement Institute) and the importance of related ACT Government policies and services (e.g. food organics and garden organics collection). This includes considering the relationship between single-use plastics and other forms of waste, including food waste.

Through the business information sessions, it was suggested that ACT Government could consider leveraging work from international jurisdictions regarding the impacts of alternatives and product standards.

Industry bodies have advised it will be important to ensure alternatives are accepted by consumers, to guarantee their uptake and avoid unintended outcomes (e.g. removing barrier bags may result in an increase in pre-packaged items and increase, rather than decrease, single-use plastics). Similarly, local businesses have said there is a role for ACT Government to help identify and source alternative products to ensure they are able to respond to change before any proposed regulations take effect.

"More research into alternatives and widespread consumer education is needed to ensure any action is practical (and therefore supported by) the majority of consumers"

"[There is a] lack of consensus on the desired sustainable alternatives and outcomes across (and within) industry and government"

"Any proposed action to reduce the impacts of unnecessary and problematic single-use plastics requires an evidence based assessment process to deliver overall environmental and community benefits and ensure perverse outcomes are avoided"

"Any alternatives have to be practical, easy to implement (e.g. easy to clean for re-use), maintain or improve food safety, contribute to decrease in food waste not increase it"

"Food waste has a significant environmental impact... 50% more food waste is thrown away than packaging, and significantly more packaging is recycled than food waste is composted"

Considering the impacts of phasing out single-use plastics

A number of written submissions highlight the importance of considering the:

- > financial impacts of alternatives to business, in particular small business, and
- > most effective ways to ensure alternatives are accepted and reflected in changed consumer behaviour.

ACT Government directorates have indicated the cost of sourcing alternatives can be more expensive than single-use plastic products (e.g. anecdotally, one directorate currently sources polystyrene cups for 2 cents per cup, compared to 7 cents per cup for cardboard alternatives).

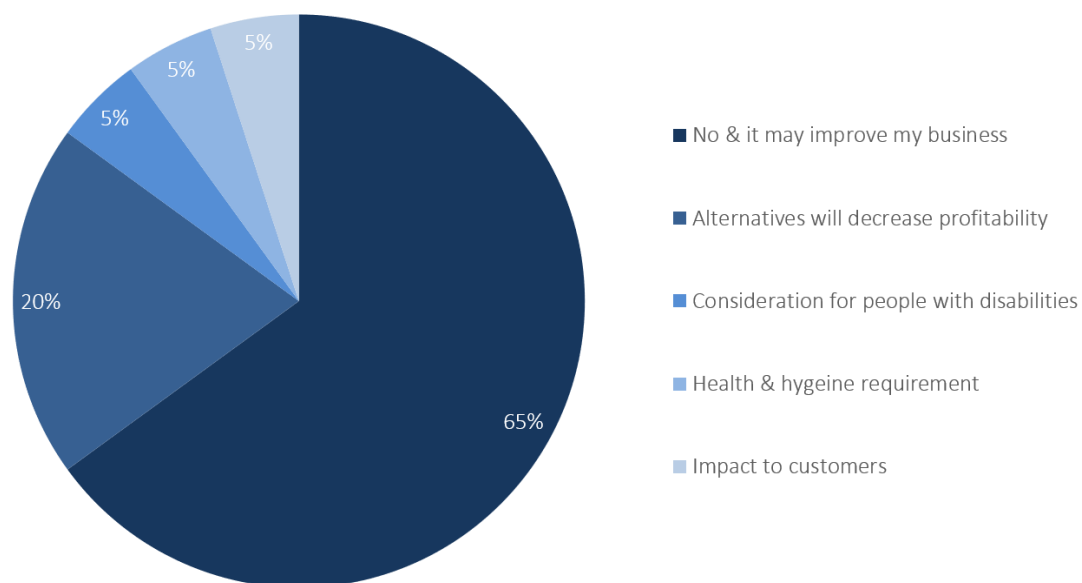
The potential impacts of phasing out single-use plastics to industry, business, the community and government need to be carefully considered. It will be important that the impacts associated with action on single-use plastics, are well understood, and appropriately managed, before implementing action to phase out single-use plastics.

Impacts to business

While some business survey respondents think phasing out single-use plastics will improve their business, others have indicated they are concerned about the potential impacts (Figure 16). Sixty-five per cent of business respondents who provided information about the potential impacts of phasing out single-use plastics do not anticipate impacts to, and think it may improve, their business. Of the business respondents who provided other reasons about how phasing out single-use plastic products may affect their business:

- > 20 per cent of respondents are concerned alternatives will decrease profitability, and
- > 5 per cent of respondents are concerned about impacts to their customers.

Figure 16: Business survey – anticipated impacts of phasing out single-use plastics²²

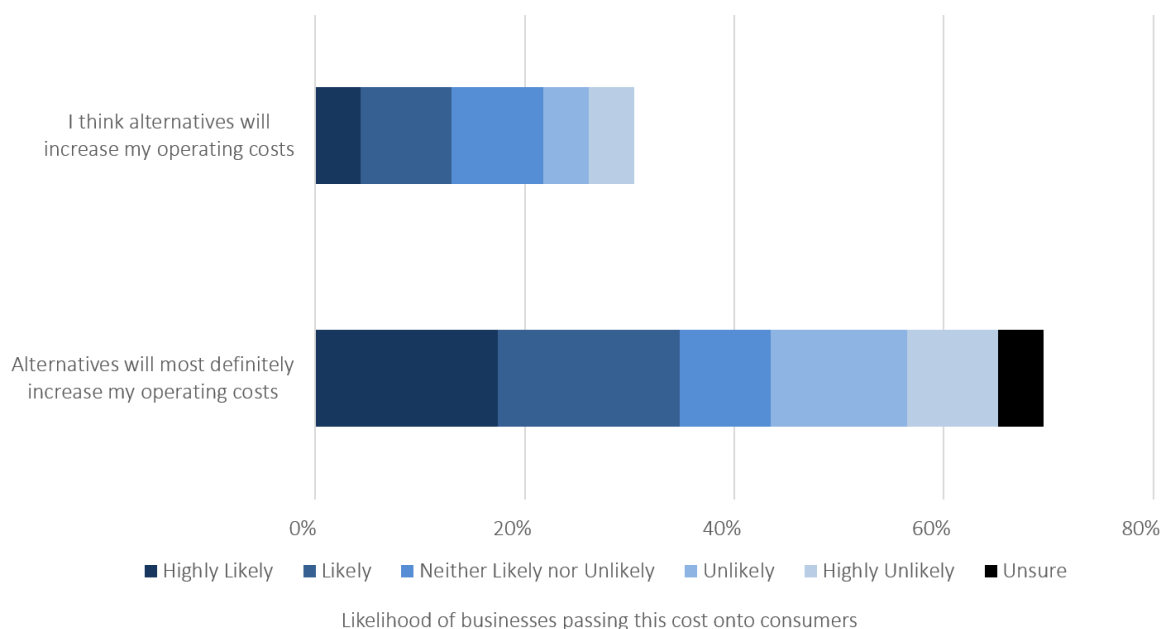


²² Business survey response to “Are there any other reasons phasing out single-use plastic products will affect your business?” (Question 12).

PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Phasing out single-use plastics may result in increased costs to business. Fifty-four per cent of business survey respondents think replacing single-use plastic products with alternatives will increase their operating costs (Figure 17) and 10 per cent are unsure.

Figure 17: Business survey - cost of alternatives and likelihood of passing additional costs onto consumers²³



Of the respondents who think their costs will increase, 70 per cent said alternatives would most definitely increase their operating costs and 30 per cent said they thought alternatives would increase their operating costs. Of these respondents, over 45 per cent said they were either highly likely or likely to pass these costs onto customers and 30 per cent said they were either unlikely or highly unlikely to pass these costs onto customers.

"What will happen to the stock that businesses already have (i.e. will we still be allowed to use the stock we have or will we have to just dump it)?"

"Disposable coffee cups are a huge part of our business which has very low margins. Banning these could have a significant impact on our profitability"

²³ Combined business survey response to "If you replaced single-use plastics with alternative products, would this add an additional cost to your business?" (Question 13) and "How likely would you be to pass this cost onto the consumer?" (Question 14).

Impacts to consumers

There are mixed views amongst the community respondents about whether they are willing to pay more to reduce the impact of single-use plastics. Some community respondents have indicated they would be willing to pay more for alternatives, while community respondents have said they will only support action on single-use plastics if additional costs are absorbed by business or the ACT Government. A number of respondents think businesses should offer a discount on their products when consumers provide their own alternatives.

"Right now it is hard to find alternatives to replace some single use items"

"Making reusable alternatives easier to purchase at point of sale"

"There are alternatives to single use plastics so they should be used, even if they cost more. Our environment and future is more important than a few dollars"

"I will be happy to support such bans IF, AND ONLY IF, alternatives are offered that don't involve the customer having to pay extra for such alternatives"

"A viable alternative needs to be available within the same price range"

Other considerations and suggestions

Written submissions suggested a number of other considerations for ACT Government to reduce the consumption and impact of single-use plastics. Suggestions included:

- > promoting the principles of a circular economy in the ACT,
- > reviewing the ACT's waste management strategy,
- > expanding the scope of the container deposit scheme (e.g. to include other products),
- > promoting the use of compostable alternatives, including in conjunction with a food organics and garden organics collection service,
- > banning the deliberate release of balloons in public,²⁴
- > regulating the distribution of plastic covered newspapers and magazines, including requiring free publications to be 'opt-in' rather than 'opt-out', and
- > promoting the use of reusable containers, through business incentives or discounts, including at supermarkets and takeaway shops.

These suggestions, and other suggestions provided through the consultation process, will be considered by the ACT Government when developing future policy responses.

"The ACT should be building a sustainable circular economy"

"Bins available in many food courts here in the ACT are only 'landfill' or plastic/glass recycling. If this initiative is to be any more than tokenistic, it needs to include bins for composting compostable items (fitting into an expanded ACT Green Bins scheme), and bins for recycling of paper-based items at all places where these containers are sold"

"CDS type mechanism for all single use plastic material"

"[I want to] know that I can go to a shop and use my own containers to get deli meats etc. At the moment I get all sorts of backlash"

"We need something along the milkman model to apply to most of our consumables"

²⁴ Under the ACT Environment Protection Regulation 2005, it is currently permissible to release less than 20 helium balloons into the environment.

Public information

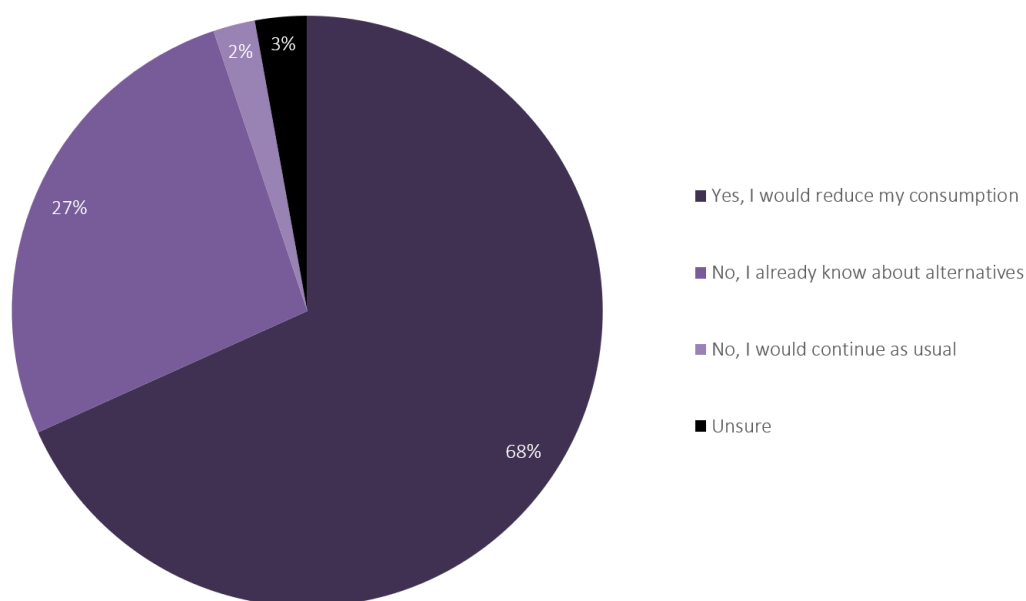
A number of people who engaged with the discussion paper want the ACT Government to provide information, for the community and for local businesses, on how to reduce the impact of single-use plastics. This includes which alternatives they should use, where they can be sourced and how to reuse and recycle plastic.

Eighteen per cent of community submissions and 50 per cent of organisational submissions recommended that action on single-use plastics be supported by an effective education campaign for the community and local businesses.

The role of education in reducing the consumption of single-use plastic is also highlighted through responses to the community survey (Figure 18):

- > 68 per cent of respondents said they would reduce their consumption of single-use plastics if they knew more about alternatives, and
- > only 2 per cent of respondents said they would continue using single-use plastics as usual.

Figure 18: Community survey - effect of information about alternatives on community behaviour²⁵



“Education is key”

“Options! And info! I have wanted to do the right thing for a long time”

“[Roll out an] education campaign that not only provides information but teaches the community how to change”

“Provide information and education to the public on what products are made from recycled plastic so as to increase demand for these products”

²⁵ Community survey response to “Do you believe if you knew more about alternatives to single-use plastics this would further reduce your consumption?” (Question 8).

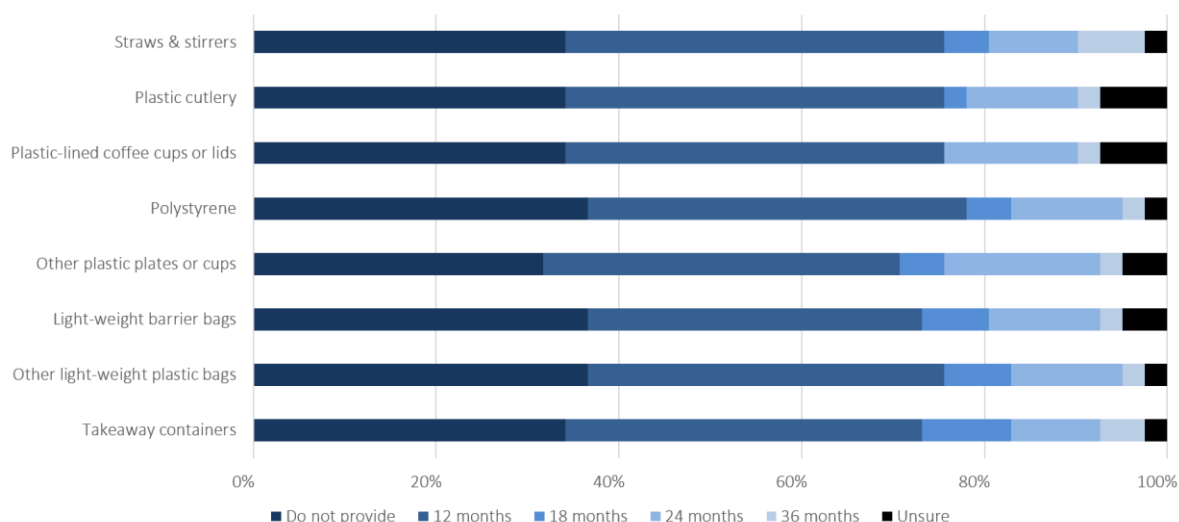
Timeframes for action

The ACT Government knows members of the community want action on single-use plastics, but there is a limited indication about how quickly this action is expected to occur. Only 9 per cent of community submissions included information about timeframes for phasing out single-use plastics. Of these, over 90 per cent of contributors wanted immediate action.

Industry and business have indicated there will need to be a transition period to enable them to efficiently and effectively respond to change without unintended consequences.

There were mixed views amongst business survey respondents about the length of time needed to phase out single-use plastic products (Figure 19). Of the respondents, over 30 per cent of businesses did not use particular single-use plastic products and as a result did not nominate a timeframe for phasing them out. Of the businesses who nominated a timeframe almost 40 per cent supported a 12-month phase out period.

Figure 19: Business survey - timeframes for phasing out single-use plastic²⁶



The importance of adequate transition periods for industry and business was also raised in organisational submissions. Of the submission that nominated a timeframe, over 40 per cent recommended extended timeframes (e.g. three to five years).

“Be the leader and remove all single-use plastics from the ACT as quickly as possible”

“Don’t phase it out. Get out the axe and make a sudden break”

“[Businesses] need time to transition and some incentives to reorganise supply chains and recycling and composting streams”

“I imagine a phase in time will help [businesses] with thousands of items of plastic”

²⁶ Business survey response to “If any of the following products were to be phased-out, what is a reasonable timeframe for your business(es) to adjust to the change?” (Question 8).

ON-GOING ENGAGEMENT

Industry, business and the community who engaged with the discussion paper have indicated that they want to remain part of the conversation on phasing out single-use plastics. Suggestions include forming a dedicated stakeholder forum and/or undertaking targeted engagement opportunities, to ensure industry, business and the community remain active partners in taking action on single-use plastics.

“We recommend the ACT Government follow the footsteps of South Australia and the steps to create change involving stakeholders. Intervention measures include a stakeholder taskforce that consists of small businesses, local government and interest group stakeholders, including people with disabilities, to drive positive change to reducing and eliminating single-use plastics”

“We appreciate this opportunity to provide input to the development of ACT’s policy for single use plastics and seek continued engagement and partnership to advance this agenda”

“We are highly supportive and very willing to participate in any community reference group to assist with this program”

“[We are] keen to collaborate with all industry and government stakeholders to reduce the impacts of litter, increase recycling rates and develop a circular economy”

NEXT STEPS

ACT Government policy officers are carefully considering the contributions received during the consultation, and will develop a range of policy options, which will be put to Government for consideration.

As part of a responsible approach to managing plastics, the ACT Government is committed to ensuring any intervention is practical and evidence-based, particularly for consumers, considers the potential impacts to manufacturers, importers and businesses, and addresses important social equity concerns. Future policy approaches will consider alternatives, including their viability and associated lifecycle impacts, before taking action.

More information, including updates from ACT Government about phasing out single-use plastics in the ACT, is available at www.yoursay.act.gov.au.

APPENDICES

A SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

B WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

C SURVEY QUESTIONS

A SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

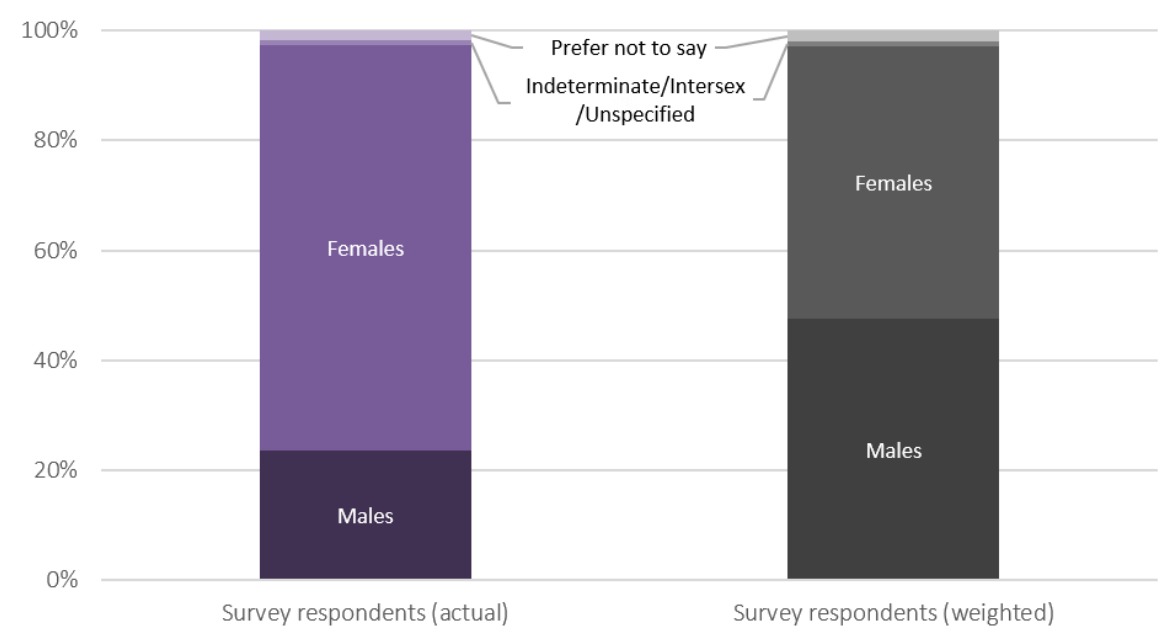
COMMUNITY SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

A large number of people participated in the online community survey. A total of 2,771 completed survey responses were received.

Age and gender

Of the community survey respondents, 24 per cent were males, 74 per cent were females, 1 per cent identified as indeterminate, intersex or unspecified in gender, and 2 per cent preferred not to provide a gender (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Community survey - gender of respondents compared to the ACT population (weighted)^{27,28}



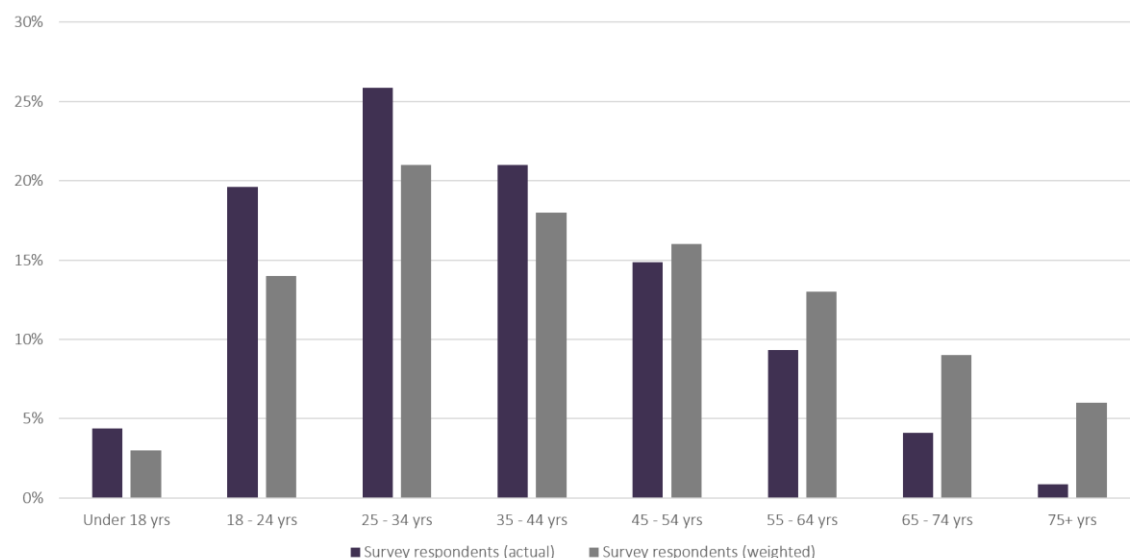
²⁷ Community survey response to “What is your gender?” (Question 15).

²⁸ Only male and female respondents were weighted using information on age and gender. A lack of information on the proportion of indeterminate/intersex/unspecified gendered people living in the ACT would have resulted in these respondents not being considered, had all survey responses been weighted using available population data (i.e. male / female population split). The approach adopted means responses of indeterminate/intersex/unspecified gendered people, and the responses of those people who preferred not to state their gender, were considered. Further information about how responses were weighted is provided below.

PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Community survey respondents represented all nominated age groups (Figure 21). There were more community survey respondents under the age of 44, and fewer respondents over the age of 45, when compared to the population.

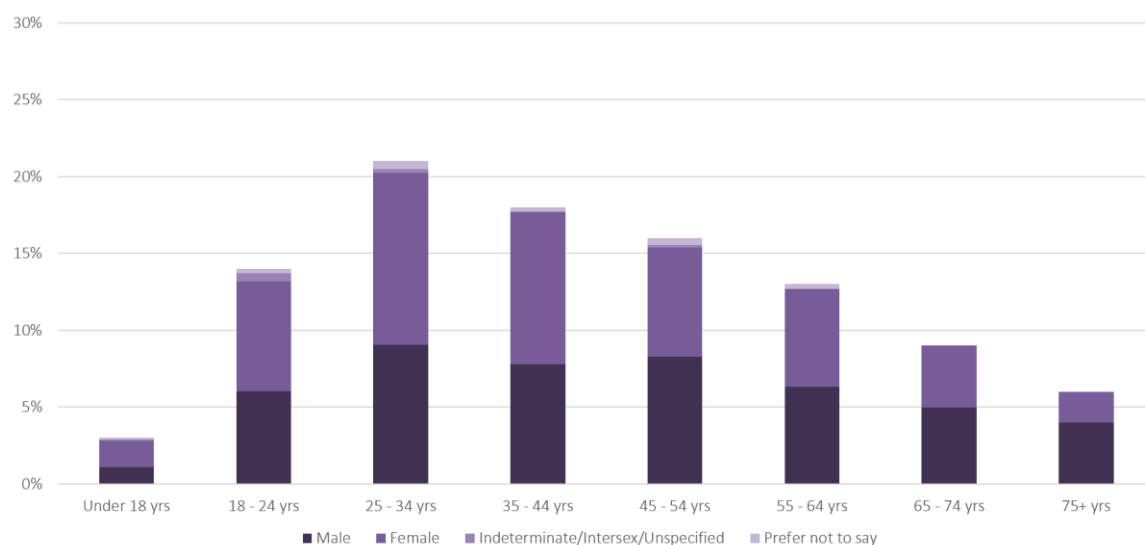
Figure 21: Community survey - age of respondents compared to the population²⁹



The demographic information collected through the community survey identified that the community survey respondents were not reflective of the ACT's population (e.g. more women completed the survey than men).

Due to the differences in the gender and age of the community respondents when compared to the ACT population, results were weighted based on the age and gender of respondents (Figure 22). This aimed to ensure, as far as possible, that the survey results were more likely to represent the views of the community, including people who were less likely to complete the survey.

Figure 22: Community survey - age and gender of community survey respondents (weighted)³⁰



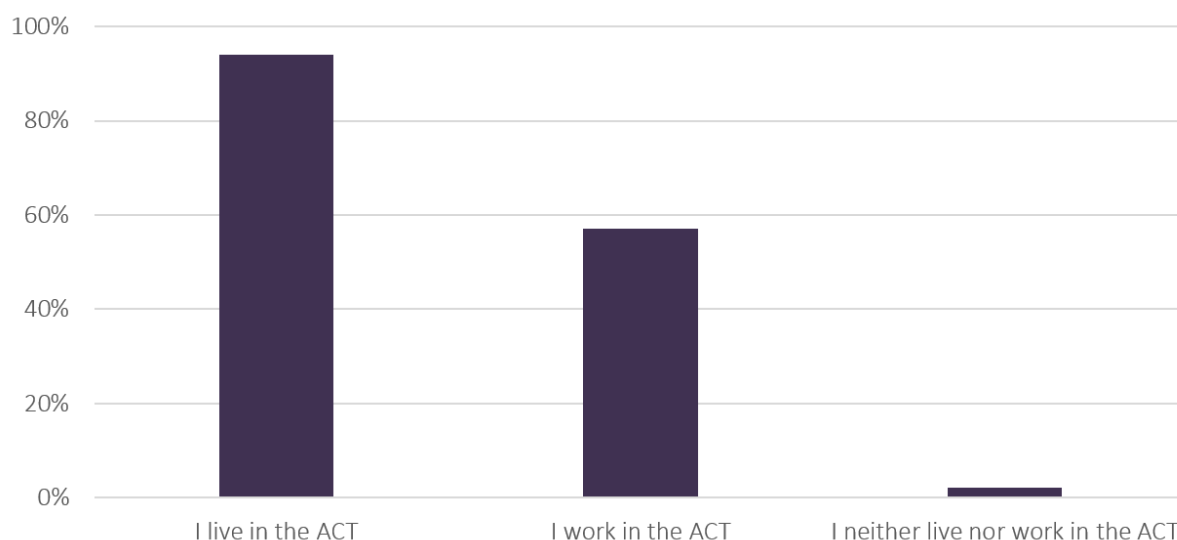
²⁹ Community survey response to "What is your age range?" (Question 14).

³⁰ Combined community survey response to "What is your age range?" (Question 14) and "What is your gender?" (Question 15). Responses to this question are weighted against the ACT population for both gender and age.

Where people live and work

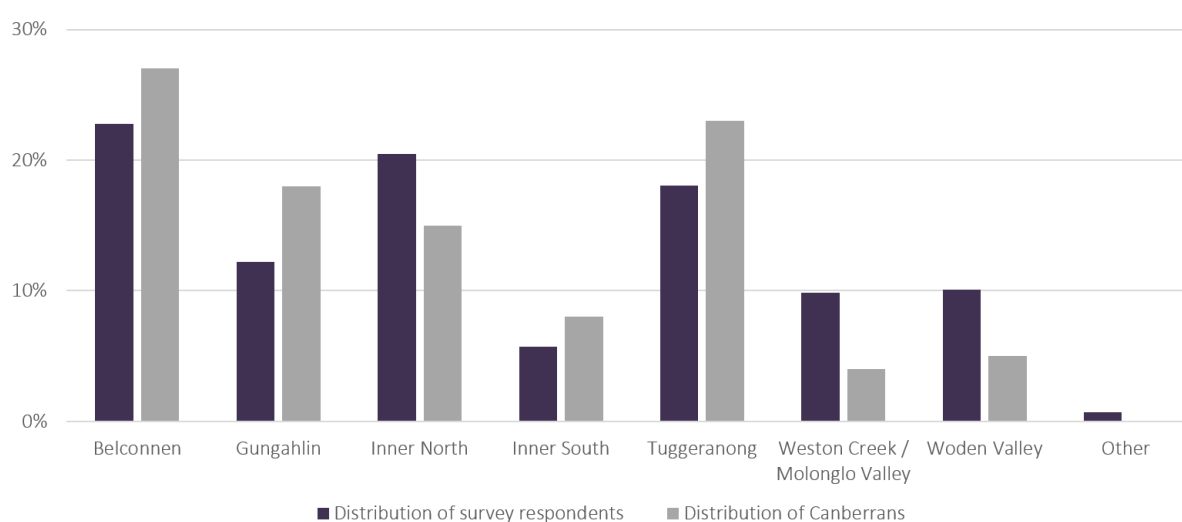
Ninety-four per cent of the survey respondents live, and 57 per cent of the survey respondents work, in the ACT (Figure 23). Of the respondents who live in the ACT, 83 per cent have lived in the ACT for more than five years and 73 per cent have lived in the ACT for more than ten years.

Figure 23: Community survey - location of respondent's residence and workplace³¹



Survey respondents live across the ACT, with more respondents living in the Inner North, Weston Creek and Molonglo Valley, and Woden Valley districts when compared to Canberra's population (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Community survey - respondents by ACT district compared to the population³²



³¹ Community survey response to "Do you live or work in the Australian Capital Territory?" (Question 1).

³² Community survey response to "What suburb do you live in?" (Question 2). Response has been translated from ACT suburb to ACT district.

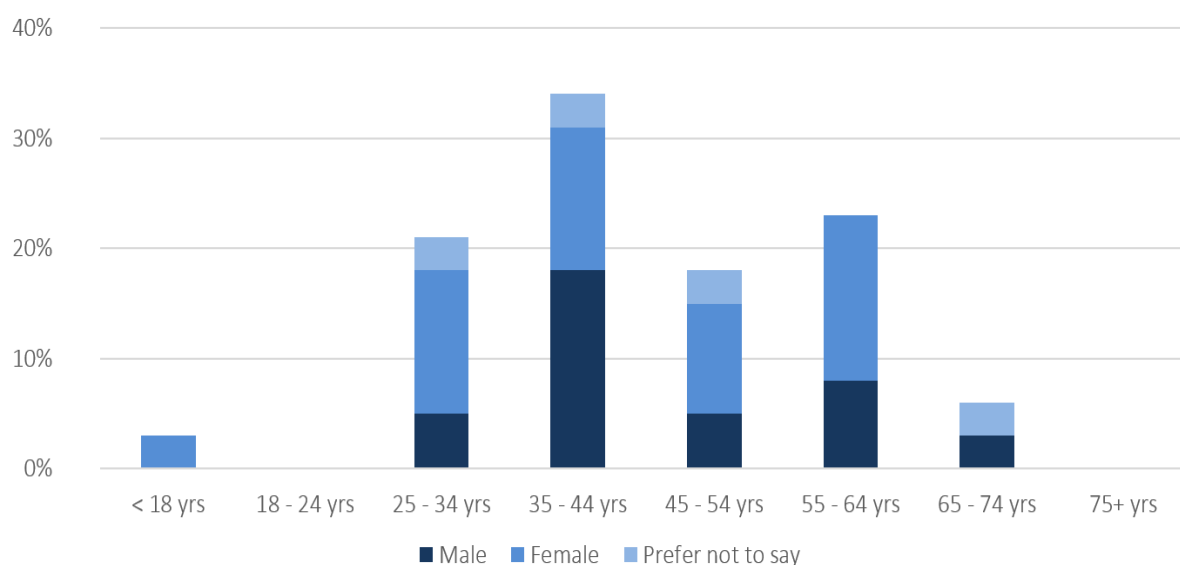
BUSINESS SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 42 completed business survey responses were received.

Age and gender

Of the business survey respondents, 38 per cent were males, 53 per cent were females and 10 per cent preferred not to provide a gender (Figure 25). There were more business survey respondents between the ages of 35 – 44 years than other age groups. Due to the small number of respondents, business survey responses were not weighted.

Figure 25: Business survey - age and gender of respondents³³

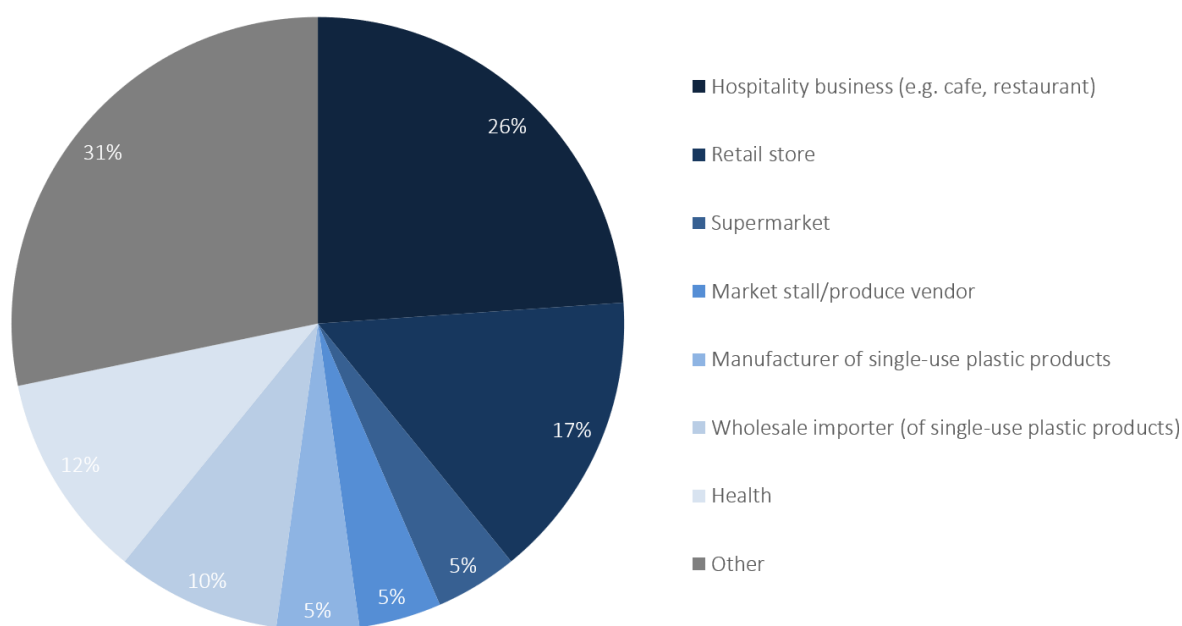


³³ Combined business survey response to “What is your age range?” (Question 16) and “What is your gender?” (Question 17).

Business sectors

A range of business sectors were represented in the business survey results (Figure 26). Twenty-six percent of respondents operate a business in hospitality (e.g. cafes and restaurants), 17 per cent operate a retail store, 22 per cent manufacture or wholesale import single-use plastic products and 12 per cent work in the health sector. Businesses categorised as 'other' make up 31 per cent of respondents and include a range of professions (e.g. lawyers, property managers, consultants, beauty professionals, event managers and landscape designers).

Figure 26: Business survey – businesses owned or operated by respondents³⁴

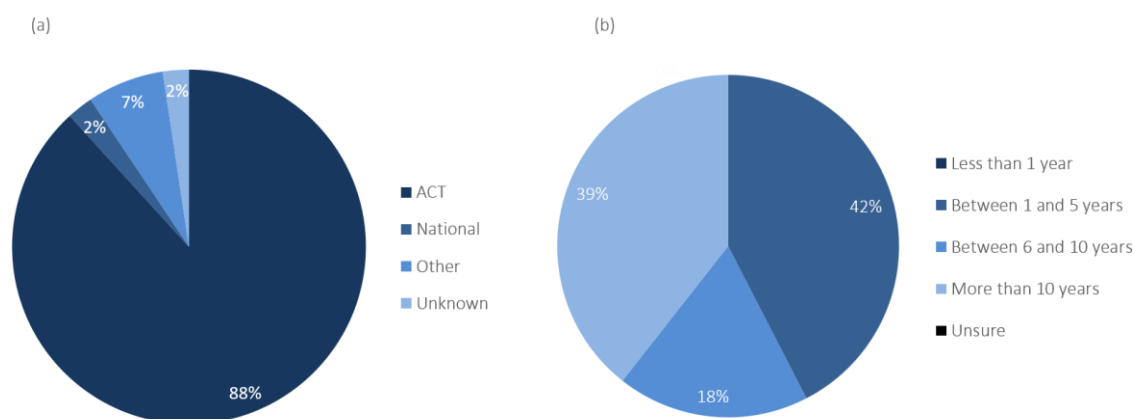


³⁴ Business survey response to "Do you own or operate any of the following businesses in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT)?" (Question 1).

PHASING OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

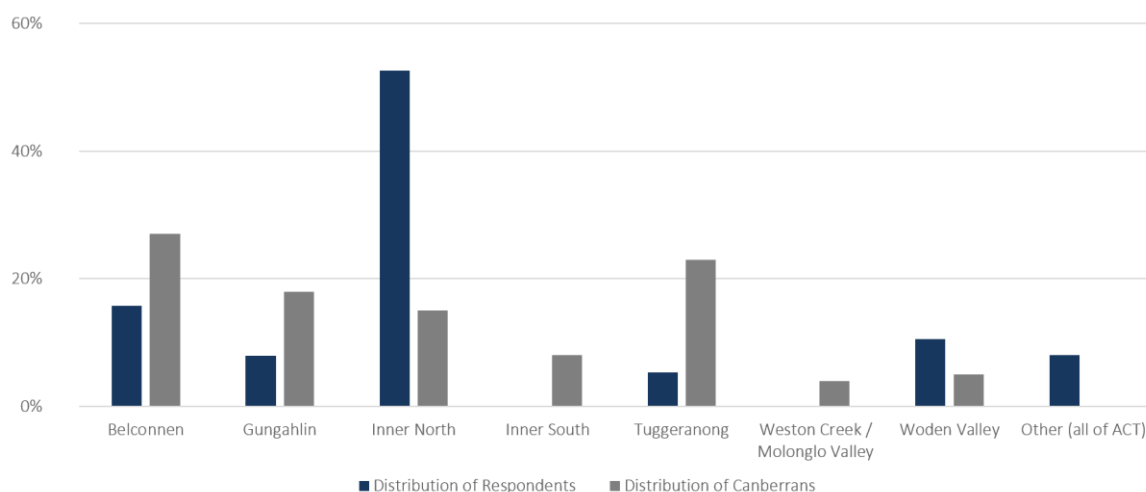
Of the business respondents, 88 per cent own or operate a business in the ACT and 2 per cent own or operate a business nationally (Figure 27a). Of the business that operate nationally and/or in the ACT, 42 per cent have operated for less than five years and 57 per cent have operated for more than five years; with 39 per cent operating for more than ten years (Figure 27b).

Figure 27: Business survey - location of businesses (a)³⁵ and duration of operation for national and ACT businesses (b)³⁶



Business respondents own or operate businesses in most districts of the ACT. Of the respondents that own or operate a business in the ACT, 53 per cent operate in the Inner North district. No respondents own or operate businesses in the Inner South or Weston Creek and Molonglo Valley districts. Three per cent of respondents operate a business across the ACT (included in 'other') (Figure 28).

Figure 28: Business survey - location of ACT based respondents compared with the population³⁷



³⁵ Business survey response to "What suburb is your business located in?" (Question 2). Response translated from ACT suburb to Australian jurisdiction.

³⁶ Business survey response to "How long have you operated your business(es) in the ACT?" (Question 3).

³⁷ Business survey response to "What suburb is your business located in?" (Question 2). Response translated from ACT suburb to ACT district.

B WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

COMMUNITY SUBMISSIONS

A total of 412 written community submissions were received through the YourSay website and by email. These submissions range in size and complexity from single sentences to lengthy emailed submissions. Submissions were analysed to identify common themes, and to inform the benefits, impacts, opportunities and challenges associated with phasing out single-use plastics in the ACT.

A lack of demographic information about contributors means these results were not weighted. Community submissions have been used to supplement and expand on the suggestions and ideas raised through the survey results.

ORGANISATIONAL SUBMISSIONS

Twenty additional written submissions were received from peak industry and environment bodies, advocacy and political groups, and government. These submissions have been analysed separately to written community submissions to ensure the views of peak bodies and advocacy groups are adequately considered.

Organisational submissions were received from the following groups:

ACT Greens	People with Disabilities ACT Inc
Advocacy for Inclusion	Pro Environment Balloon Alliance (PEBA)
Australian Food & Grocery Council	Public Health Association of Australia
Australian Industrial Ecology Network Pty Ltd	See-Change 'WasteLess' Group
Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation	Soroptimist International
Conservation Council (ACT Region)	Tetra Pak
Detmold Group	The Refoundry
Environment Defenders' Office	Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Liberal Democrats	Woolworths Group
National Retail Association	Zero Waste Revolution

These submissions have been analysed to inform the benefits, impacts, opportunities and challenges associated with phasing out single-use plastics in the ACT. A number of submissions include detailed recommendations to inform ACT Government policy, including implementation approaches. These recommendations will be considered to inform the development of ACT Government policy responses.

Written submissions are available on the YourSay website at: www.yoursay.act.gov.au.

C SURVEY QUESTIONS

COMMUNITY SURVEY

- 1 Do you live or work in the Australian Capital Territory?
- 2 What suburb do you live in?
- 3 How important is it for the ACT Government to take action in reducing the following products in our community?
- 4 If you answered above that it is only 'Slightly important' or 'Not at all important' for the ACT Government to take action to reduce the usage of any of these products, can you please tell us why?
- 5 How likely are you to support phasing out the following products?
- 6 If you answered above that you are 'Definitely not' or 'Probably not' likely to support phasing out any of these products, can you please tell us why?
- 7 What phase-out approach would be most effective in reducing your usage/consumption of single-use plastic products?
- 8 Do you believe if you knew more about alternatives to single-use plastics this would further reduce your consumption?
- 9 Is there anything else that would be effective in reducing your consumption?
- 10 Are you currently doing any of the following?* (If none apply, skip this question)
- 11 What do you believe is the most significant impact of single-use plastic in the ACT?
- 12 Do you believe single-use plastics is an issue at any of the following?* (If none apply, skip this question)
- 13 Are there any other single-use plastic products that the ACT Government, business and communities should be looking at?
- 14 What is your age range?
- 15 What is your gender?
- 16 How long have you lived in the ACT?

BUSINESS SURVEY

- 1 Do you own or operate any of the following businesses in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT)?
- 2 What suburb is your business located in?
- 3 How long have you operated your business(es) in the ACT?
- 4 Does your business sell or provide any of the following single-use plastic disposable products?
- 5 If you answered 'alternatives' for any of the products listed above, please tell us what alternatives you are using.
- 6 As a business owner, how likely are you to support a phasing-out of the following products?
- 7 If you said 'Probably not' or 'Definitely not' for any of the products above, please tell us why.
- 8 If any of the following products were to be phased-out, what is a reasonable timeframe for your business(es) to adjust to the change?
- 9 What phase-out approach would you prefer?
- 10 You selected 'neither'. What makes you say that?
- 11 What are some of the barriers for reducing single-use plastics for your business? (Select all that apply)
- 12 Are there any other reasons phasing out single-use plastic products will affect your business?
- 13 If you replaced single-use plastics with alternative products, would this add an additional cost to your business?
- 14 How likely would you be to pass this cost onto the consumer?
- 15 Are there any other impacts that should be considered?
- 16 What is your age range?
- 17 What is your gender?



TCCS
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