

Sustainable packaging: An introduction for SMEs



ARL
Marketplace

For small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) considering a change to more sustainable packaging, navigating the process can seem confusing. This fact sheet contains key terms and ideas to get you up to speed with sustainable packaging best practice.



Key sustainable packaging terms

Packaging terminology can seem like a different language! Here are some of the key phrases you will come across, along with a practical example of where you might have seen it in action.

Packaging avoidance/reduction:

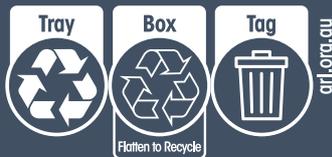
Does all of your business's packaging perform an essential function? One of the most impactful changes a business can make is to eliminate or reduce unnecessary packaging from their operation altogether.

Packaging avoidance/reduction in action:

Many businesses across Australia have made the choice to phase out single-use, lightweight plastic shopping bags.

Recyclable packaging:

A product's packaging is only considered recyclable if more than 80% of the population is able to recycle it, and it is technically recyclable through Australia's recycling system.



Recyclable packaging in action:

Thousands of businesses - including SMEs - use recyclable packaging. Get started today.

Reusable packaging:

Reusable refers to packaging that has been designed specifically to be used multiple times by your customer for the same purpose it was originally designed for. Note it is different to repurposed packaging, where your customer uses packaging for other functions - like storing ingredients in old jam jars. Reusable models can be used in both business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) packaging.

Reusable packaging in action:

Unpackaged Eco is a local Australian company that sells refillable plastic-free cleaning products that have been designed to be reused. CHEP provides reusable transport and shipping options such as pallets and crates.



Recycled content:

This is material that has been successfully recycled and turned into new packaging, products or infrastructure. Using recycled content in packaging reduces our pressure on finite virgin resources and keeps packaging materials in the system for longer.

Recycled content in action:

Businesses of all sizes are making the switch to packaging and products made out of recycled materials. Asahi's Cool Ridge water bottles are made with 100% recycled PET and Natures Organics' Earth Choice and Organic Care range are made from 100% post-consumer recycled plastic.



Compost

Compostable packaging:

This is packaging that is designed to be composted after use, in either an industrial or home composting environment. Compostable packaging must meet approved Australian standards and carry composting instructions for your customer. Visit the [Australasian Bioplastics Association](#) to find out more.

Compostable packaging in action:

Refer to [APCO's Considerations for Compostable Plastic Packaging](#) resource which includes a handy decision tree to understand if compostable packaging is suitable for your business. Compostable packaging is the most suitable for use as an alternative to single use, unnecessary, and problematic plastic packaging in the food service sector as these materials cannot be recycled.



Take action:

Keen to learn more about sustainable packaging? Start your business' ARL journey today at www.arlmarketplace.org.au.



Working together to get the ARL on-pack.

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