

**CHOOSE  
TO REUSE**  
Port Douglas



**BOOMERANG  
ALLIANCE**  
Plastic Free Places

# THE SAFETY OF REUSABLE FOODWARE

## WHAT IS 'REUSABLE' FOODWARE?

There is currently no strict guidance on what is considered reusable in Australia.

We define reusable foodware as any food or drink receptacle that is made for, or capable of, multiple use, where such multiple use will not compromise the integrity of the product or make it unable to be washed via sanitary processes.

By contrast, a single-use product is typically intended to be used just once or for a short period of time before being disposed of.

## WHAT IS THE LAW ON ACCEPTING REUSABLE FOODWARE?

Legally, food safety matters relating to packaging are contained in the [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code- Standard 3.2.2](#).



It requires food businesses when packaging food to:

- only use packaging material fit for its intended use,
- only use packaging material that is not likely to cause food contamination,
- ensure food is protected from contamination during all stages,
- not reuse single-use items (noting the code does not define single use).

Therefore, accepting reusable cups and containers from customers is allowable under the code, providing these are suitable for use, clean, and not designed for single use.

## ARE REUSABLES LESS HYGIENIC THAN SINGLE-USE PRODUCTS?

Provided that a reusable container is clean, there is no reason that it is less hygienic than a single-use product. A clean reusable container will be handled by the server in the same way as a single-use product and will hold the same food or drink item.

## WILL ACCEPTING REUSABLES INCREASE THE RISK OF FOOD CONTAMINATION?

There is NO evidence of this. If a reusable container is clean, then it should be considered the same as a single-use item.

## WILL I BE FINED FOR ACCEPTING REUSABLES?

No. There is currently no legislation or regulation in any state or territory in Australia that can be used to fine a business for accepting reusables.

## DO I HAVE TO ACCEPT REUSABLES?

No. A business has the right to refuse BYO reusable cups and containers if they decide to. Equally though, a customer can choose to go to a business that does allow them.

If a business chooses to accept BYO reusables, they must ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to manage associated food safety risks (e.g.- all containers are checked to ensure they are visibly clean and odour free).

## DO I NEED AN ONSITE DISHWASHER TO USE/ACCEPT REUSABLES?

No. Under the Australia & New Zealand Food Standards Code [Appendix 6: Cleaning and sanitising surfaces and utensils](#), a dishwasher is not required to effectively clean and sanitise eating and drinking utensils.



Under the Code, cleaning and sanitising can be done manually (e.g. using sinks), or using dishwashers or other specialised equipment.

Therefore, as long as there are appropriate sinks and food safe washing/sanitising substances available, then reuse is permitted.

## WAYS TO MITIGATE RISKS AND ADDRESS YOUR CONCERNS

- Only accept reusable foodware that is visibly clean and odour-free and ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to manage any associated food safety risks.
- Only accept reusables that are genuinely 'reusable' - this way you can be sure that the material is made to be washed, withstand heat and hold food/drinks safely.
- If you're still concerned, you can sanitise BYO reusables in house - this can be done quickly and efficiently by having a vessel on hand with food grade sanitiser, whereby the reusable item is placed in the solution before receiving its food or beverage. You can also wash the container prior to use.