

What to say when people still want to suck with plastic straws

Common FAQ's

Paper Straws COST too much

Cost is a key factor and hesitation point for businesses considering switching from plastic to paper straws. However, companies that offer straws “upon request” actually find that customers request fewer straws overall, diminishing the increased cost of paper straws and allowing restaurants to save money while saving the planet.

We use biodegradable straws; they say they are ‘environmentally friendly’ and are made of plant based materials. Eg.) Oxy-degradable/Oxy-straw/Biodegradable/Degradable straws

Are they paper? Yes – great!

No. Then what are they made of? Bio-degradable = Be-careful.....Read the fine print... Most straws that are marketed as bio/degradable/compostable won't actually begin to break down unless there are many environmental conditions applied. Bioplastics research and manufacturing is relatively new, and while there are some well-known biodegradable plastic alternatives, there is no bioplastic that exists (yet), that will decompose through normal rubbish disposal. Therefore, paper is the only single-use alternative that is accepted for Officially Registered Businesses of the Last Straw on the GBR (served on request only).

FACTS on biodegradables:

- 1.) For them to biodegrade means they have to be exposed to the right level of oxygen, temperature and UV light. So if businesses use ‘biodegradable straws’ like bio-plastic etc they actually won't break down for a very long time – as they aren't exposed to the above conditions. Businesses usually put straws straight into the kitchen garbage, meaning the straws will never receive the correct light or oxygen to break down! Even if they were separated very little waste services in Australia have the ability to break down biodegradables with exact conditions that are required.
- 2.) When they do get exposed to the right conditions they actually break up into smaller fragments. As they degrade at different rates when in rubbish piles, some parts then become smaller and easily blown away/ingested by animals.
- 3.) If they end up in sea water (aka Cairns Marina = GBR) they remain as rigid as a plastic straw as the salt water does not allow the polymers in them to break down.
- 4.) Lastly, a lot of ‘biodegradable’ straws that are on the market actually have plastic polymers in them still and are hidden in the very fine print! Sneaky – I know!

Why is plastic so bad for the marine environment? My business is land based it doesn't matter, it goes to the tip not in the ocean.

All drains lead to the ocean, all plastic that has ever been created is still on earth, all plastic waste that has ever been put in your businesses bin that is plastic is still in the tip. Following?

In the ocean plastic does not breakdown, instead it breaks up into smaller pieces, right down to the molecular level, making it the perfect size for animals to eat. Animals from whales to seabirds to the very smallest creatures of the ocean eco-system are ingesting plastics on a daily basis. Not only are some animals starving to death with stomachs full of plastic, we're finding increasing numbers of fish reaching our tables with toxic plastic embedded in their systems. By the year 2050 it is estimated that there will be more plastic in the ocean by weight than fish.

My customers expect straws and get angry when they don't get one

Don't take this as a negative, turn it into a positive and teach your customers a fact about plastic and how you are being environmentally conscious. Real off your spiel on why straws suck!

- 1.) Last forever
- 2.) Every piece of plastic you have used in your life is still around – we are trying to reduce our environmental footprint by eliminating single-use plastics.
- 3.) Plastic straws are made of petroleum... who wants to sip from petrochemicals?
- 4.) Highlight what plastics are doing to our environment and marine life as well as how they are entering the food-chain (bio-accumulation).
- 5.) Give the customer hope – they are making a difference by not using a plastic straw – save a turtle skip the straw!
- 6.) Lastly, if they really need a straw or want one offer a paper straw. (On request only).

We only use a few straws at our business it doesn't matter if they are plastic.

Plastic straws are an unnecessary convenience with a big impact. Disposable plastics contribute a great deal to the issue of waste worldwide, plastic straws being a major part of that. Over 500 Million plastic straws are used and thrown away every day, ending up in landfill or in our oceans. If everybody said this, imagine how many straws would be used around the world– everyone can make a difference, no matter how big or how small. Remember, plastic lasts FOREVER!

A single plastic straw might seem innocent enough, but multiplied by the billions of people that buy billions of drinks across the world every single day, and you start to get an idea of the scale of the problem.

Why become a member of The Last Straw on the Great Barrier Reef?

The Last Straw on the GBR has been adopted from the national campaign The Last Straw, which is currently capturing the imagination of consumers across Australia. We have a strong social media following, we have a big reach and we have an idea that is easy to get on board with, literally. Membership is completely free and has a lot of great perks- like looking really modern and cool to your customers when listed on our website. Reducing straw output means you save money and our social media reach ensures that your business gets the added bonus of super positive high profile marketing. Our model means that you get signage to display and training information for your staff to be more straw conscious when serving. Not to mention that your venue gets to come on board with the movement to end the use of disposable plastics!

There really isn't any downside!

How do I join?

Simply register with The Last Straw on the GBR by signing the official pledge on our website www.thelaststrawontheabr.wordpress.com and emailing it to thelaststrawontheabr@outlook.com or send us a message on Facebook or Instagram.

