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# COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING

**When considering options for packaging that has less impact on the environment, compostable packaging seems like a good option but not all compostables are created equal.**

To reach a compostable classification, packaging must reach specific quality levels for ecotoxicity, among other criteria. The Australasian Bioplastics Association (ABA) is the governing body that provides and sets the standards for biodegradable packaging in Australia.

Compostable packaging is made from an organic substance, such as bamboo, paper or sugar cane. It is classed as either:

- packaging that will decompose in a home compost bin; or
- packaging that requires disposal in an industrial compost facility.

## WHAT IS HOME COMPOSTABLE?



Home composting occurs at a lower temperature and over a longer time than industrial composting – usually about a year. Everything that goes into making home compostable packaging should break down and decompose into organic soil if it is labelled Home Compostable.

The Australian Standard AS 5810-2010 covers home compostable packaging. Packaging reaching this standard carries the Home Compostable logo, which helps consumers identify packaging that can go into their home composting bin. If the package does not have this logo it has not been certified and therefore its environmental impact to your backyard compost is unknown.

## WHAT IS INDUSTRIALLY COMPOSTABLE?



Industrial composting can deal with a broader range of compostable products and operates in a highly controlled setting with specific temperatures and conditions. Industrial composting applies a higher temperature to the already pre-processed packaging material. The high heat breaks the packaging down even further, hastening the decomposition, sometimes in a matter of weeks.

If packaging is classified as industrially compostable, it will have undergone strict testing and will be accredited with the Australian Standard: AS 4736-2006.

This standard is stamped with 'seedling logo' certification which allow consumers to identify packaging as industrially compostable.

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## COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Compostable packaging reduces the environmental impact at the end-of-life stage if it is disposed of in the appropriate composting facility. A greater benefit of industrial composting is that you can leave organics such as food and sauces on the packaging and these organics improve the speed of breakdown process, as long as not contaminated with non-organics.

In Australia, there are only 150 industrial composting facilities. The pick up and delivery service for volume industrially compostable packaging and organics (FOGO) is not available in all areas, including the Sunshine Coast. This means the compostable packaging placed in recycling bins today end up in landfill anyway.

## SO FOR THE LOVE OF COOLUM, WHAT IS BEST?

<b>REUSABLES</b>	Set up a cup 'borrow library', which Coolum Surf Club has done with help from Pottery for the Planet. Encourage your customers to BYO cup, cutlery or plate. Encourage your customers to dine or drink in.
<b>HOME COMPOSTABLE (AS5810) WITH EDUCATION</b>	Encourage your customers to take it home to compost in their own backyard through signage and education It is estimated that less than 1% of Australians will do this but we think Coolum can lead the way here.
<b>RESPONSIBLE INDUSTRIALLY COMPOSTABLE (AS 4736)</b>	There is a commercial composting facility in Palmwoods– Earthborn Australia <a href="http://www.earthbornaustralia.com.au">www.earthbornaustralia.com.au</a> . They will take volume uncontaminated food and industrially certified packaging such as coffee cups for approximately \$65/tonne delivery fee.

For more information, check out:

<https://www.biogone.com.au/difference-between-home-compostable-industrial-compostable-packaging>

<http://aipack.com.au/fight-food-waste>