

**6 September 2022**

Cheremie Marsden  
Manager Policy, Regulatory Policy, Initiatives and Advice  
NSW Environment Protection Authority  
Locked Bag 5022  
Parramatta NSW 2124  
**Attention:** Ella Hagis

Delivered by email to [plastics@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:plastics@epa.nsw.gov.au) and [ella.hagis@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ella.hagis@epa.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms Marsden

## Upcoming Single-use Plastics Bans Feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the upcoming ban of single-use plastics in New South Wales (NSW).

As you are likely aware, our peak disabled people's organisation for people with all types of disability in NSW has been lobbying against proposed bans of **plastic straws** across Australia for more than four years.

Plastic straws, including single-use plastic straws, can prevent **aspiration from dysphagia** and save our lives by helping to prevent us from **choking on liquids and dying of pneumonia**. They can also help prevent the **well-publicised risks** of other plastic straw alternatives which can include being a choking hazard, injury risk, not positionable, costly or not high-temperature safe.

We appreciate the way the **NSW Environment Protection Authority** (NSW EPA) has kept our Disabled People's Organisation up to date on the state of reforms, giving people with disability the opportunity to provide feedback on proposed reforms and co-design elements of the reforms, such as the **Plastic Single-Use Straws Exemption 2022** that was granted 1 July 2022.

PWDA encourages the agency to continue to co-design policy and reforms with PWDA and people with disability, consistent with our human rights in the United Nations **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, especially **article 29** which is our right to participate equally at the regional level in matters such as public affairs.

PWDA is pleased that since June, the NSW EPA has published and updated its **plastic single-use straws exemptions guidance**, so that existing plastic straw distributors – such as cafes, restaurants and places where people with disability receive support – can find out or check they can still supply us with single-use plastic straws.

Given the new laws come into effect on 1 November 2022, we believe it's now time to introduce an education campaign to let people know about our state's **medical and disability-use exemption on straws**, so people won't toss their stock or not replenish it for us. We want to ensure demand, so manufacturers won't stop making plastic straws.

Single-use plastic straws make drinking accessible to us and can help save our lives. Plastic straws – single-use plastic straws – must be available where we can use them, each time, every time. We encourage you to help us make sure that happens, by running a widespread and active education campaign on #PlasticStrawsExemptions.

Yours sincerely



**Sebastian Zagarella**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**People with Disability Australia**