

The Official Aussie Reusable Cup Swap Systems Guide

A RESPONSIBLE CAFES
GUIDE FOR AUSTRALIAN CAFES,
OFFICES AND EVENTS



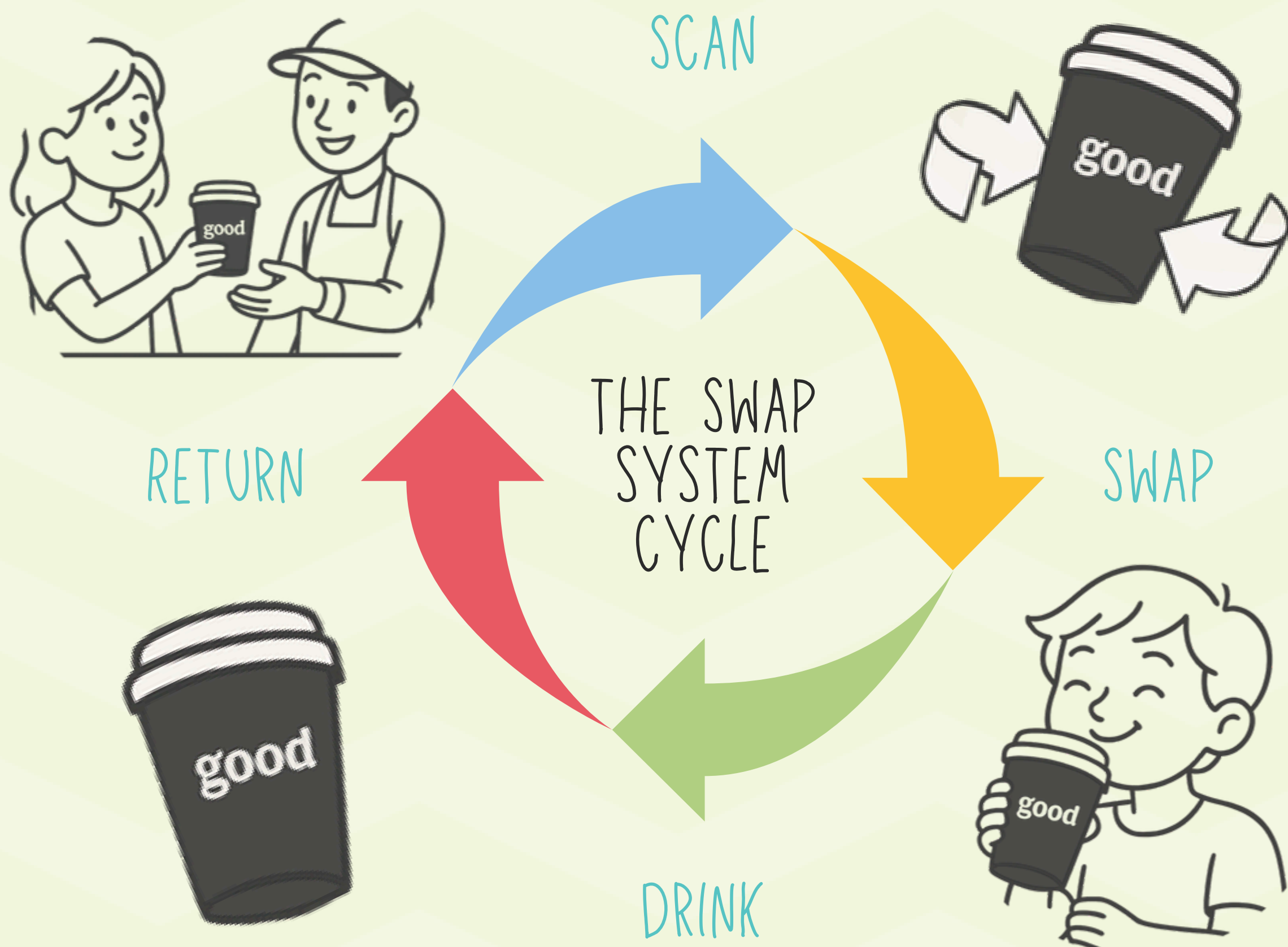
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
BENEFITS OF REUSABLE CUPS	4
CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS	5
KICKING THE CUP: LESSONS FROM CAFE OWNERS	6-8
THE A TO Z OF REUSABLE CUP SWAP SYSTEMS IN AUSTRALIA	9-10
SWAP SYSTEMS FOR CAFES	11-14
SWAP SYSTEMS FOR EVENTS	15-17
SWAP SYSTEMS FOR OFFICES	18
MISC SWAP SYSTEMS	19
SPECIAL OFFERS FOR CAFES	20
HOW MUCH CAN YOU SAVE BY SWITCHING TO REUSE	21
WHICH SWAP SYSTEM WILL YOU CHOOSE?	21



Reusable cup swap systems

A RESPONSIBLE CAFES GUIDE FOR AUSTRALIAN CAFES



It's a library for cups!

Swap systems make takeaway coffee sustainable for the customer who wants to do the right thing every time!

Cafes cut out disposables by providing reusable cups that customers borrow and return like a library.

Cafes sign up to one of the many swap systems available (more on that later!) that supplies branded reusable cups. Customers borrow, tap an app or pay a small deposit when they use the reusable cup, and get it back when they return it.

Benefits of Reusable Cup Swaps

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Disposable cups = HUGE waste problem!

Over **1.8 billion coffee cups (+1.5 billion lids!)** are thrown away each year, most ending in landfill or the ocean.

Reusable systems shift cafes up the waste hierarchy from disposal to reuse, meaning far fewer cups are produced and end up in landfills!



ECONOMIC SAVINGS

Beyond the planet, cafes save money when they ditch disposables.

Australian cafes using **Good Reusables swap system** report saving around **\$600 each month** on cup costs.

The swap systems often cover or minimise the small washing costs, so the bulk of savings goes right to your bottom line.

CUSTOMER LOYALTY & BRAND

Encouraging reusables lets customers know you care about sustainability and want to reduce waste in the hoso industry!

Reuse programs encourage repeat visits and build a community who share your values.

Connect with your clients by offering waste-free coffees and perks when they choose to reuse.



Challenges & solutions

HOW TO MANAGE COMMON ISSUES

CUSTOMER UPTAKE

Not everyone will start borrowing a cup immediately

Make it attractive and easy! Charge a small deposit or offer a tiny discount on coffee. **Huskee's** Borrow system, for example, uses an app to hold a \$3 deposit (refunded on return) and even gives rewards for frequent reuse.

Promote the program in-store with signage and staff encouragement. Once customers see friends using reusable cups, social proof does the rest.



HYGIENE

Worrying about used cups?

Good Reusables estimated that washing and sanitising works out at ~\$0.01 per cup, so cafes don't need to budget for excessive dishwashing costs.

Huskee's Borrow network even has dedicated drop-off bins and a commercial washing hub (available to businesses in Sydney) so staff can send off batches for professional cleaning. Emphasise to customers that each borrowed cup is always cleaned and safe to reuse.



LOGISTICS & TRAINING

Introducing any new process takes effort to learn

Choose a turnkey system. **Good Reusables** and others provide starter kits and staff training: adding a deposit charge at the register only takes about 5–10 minutes to set up.

Use drop-off boxes or baskets for returns, keep spare cups for peak times. And remember: if a cup gets damaged, most programs let you return extras for a replacement. Overall, cafes using swap systems report no significant extra labour cost - in fact, most of the waste handling is built into the programs.



Kicking the cup

CASE
STUDY #1

LESSONS FROM CAFE OWNERS

When it comes to single-use coffee cups, most people think they're making the 'sustainable' choice by opting for compostable. But as cafe owners Tenzin and Fiona shared in a recent panel organised by Zero Waste Victoria, the reality is a lot more complicated - and a lot more inspiring.

FROM COMPOSTABLE CONFUSION TO REUSE REVOLUTION

Tenzin, who runs Boneless Cafe in the regional town of Bermagui in NSW, started with compostable cups and packaging. Like many of us, he believed that putting them into the council's FOGO bin meant they'd be properly composted. But over time, he found out none of it was actually being processed because, compostable packaging is no longer accepted in the FOGO bin in NSW.

WE HAD A COMPOSTABLE BIN... AND THEN I FOUND OUT
THAT NONE OF IT WAS GETTING COMPOSTED.

They were also paying more for compostable cups that just ended up in landfill - this frustration became a turning point. Around the same time, other local cafe owners were going through similar disappointment.

Together, they decided to try something new: a community wide switch to reusable cups with a \$3 deposit system, using **Good Reusables**.

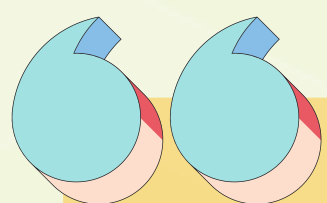
ONCE IT WAS CLEAR THAT IT WASN'T WORKING, WE THOUGHT
- LET'S JUST DO THIS OURSELVES.

One of the biggest surprises? Customers loved it.

99% OF PEOPLE WERE LIKE, 'WOW, THAT IS A GREAT IDEA'.

They weren't deterred by the deposit model. In fact, many were happy to give more. Tenzin even set up a pay-it-forward jar in case someone didn't have the \$3 for a deposit.

BASICALLY NO ONE TAKES MONEY FROM THE PAY FORWARD JAR, BUT
LOTS OF PEOPLE PUT MONEY IN. PEOPLE WON'T EVEN WANT THEIR
REFUND BACK FROM THE CUP... THEY SAY, 'JUST TAKE IT, THAT'S A
TIP FOR THE COFFEE—YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING'.



CASE STUDY #2



As a brand new cafe we knew we wanted to do all we can to eliminate waste, but going single use cup free felt risky. Some cafe owners with many years of industry experience even advised against it - they simply couldn't imagine how it would work. Since we're located in a regional tourist town with huge seasonal fluctuations, we were nervous about missing out on business or upsetting visitors.

Marion and the team at Responsible Cafes encouraged us with a number of examples across Australia and connected us with other like minded cafe owners to hear their experiences first hand.

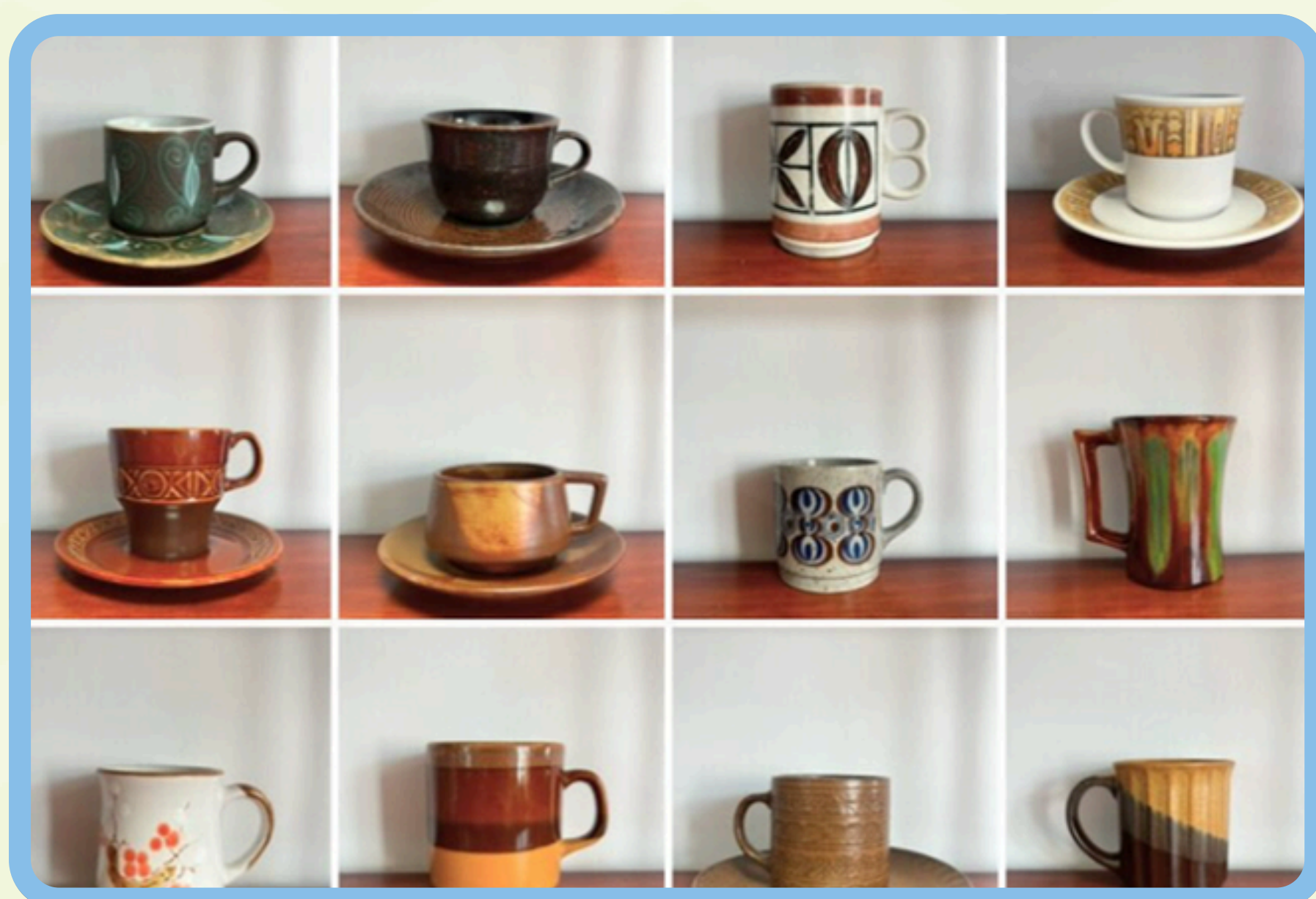
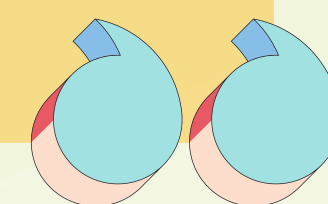
Ultimately we made a values-based decision to go with our gut; we're so glad we took the plunge with Good Reusables. We started as a single use cup free cafe from our opening day and have never looked back. Customers are surprised but the response to our borrow system has been really positive. They also love our old school cloth napkins and feel good knowing there's a little bit less waste resulting from their visit.

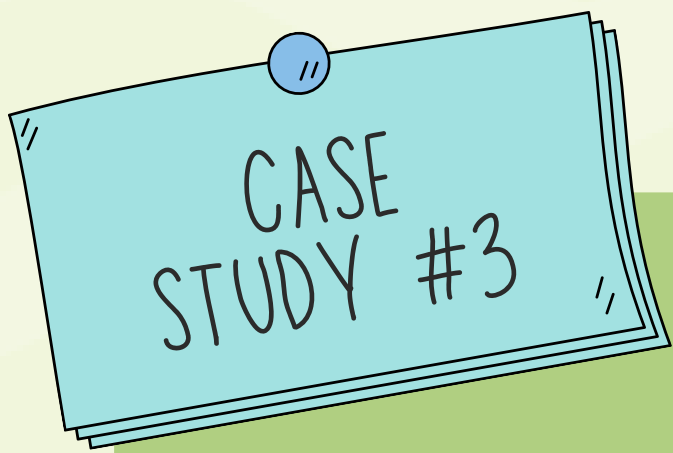
We're convinced this is a win for our customers, a win for our business, and a win for our little pocket of the world. Win, win, win - happy.

Adriel Booker, co-owner of Found Coffee House

@found.au

Victor Harbor, SA





TIPS FROM FIONA AT STREAT

Fiona works with STREAT, a social enterprise with a strong sustainability and social impact mission. Their approach? Test, trial, and tailor.

Since 2019, they've experimented with everything from cup libraries and loan schemes to quick-sip tables, pricing incentives, and Reusables Tuesdays. One of their biggest wins? Shifting behaviour through social norms.

WE CREATED A WALL OF CHAMPIONS SHOWING PEOPLE WHO BRING REUSABLES, TO MAKE IT THE NEW NORMAL.

They also put a big emphasis on staff as 'cup champions', since baristas are the front line for culture shift. And while COVID threw a wrench in their plans to go 100% reusable in 2020, they bounced back with adaptive solutions like contactless cup handling.

THEIR KEY LESSONS?

- **Don't shame - celebrate:** Reuse should feel good, not guilt-ridden
- **Make it easy:** Place reminders and cup libraries close to exits or ordering points
- **Customise:** What works in a corporate cafe may flop in a transient setting
- **Keep it playful:** Challenges, posters, and friendly competitions go a long way

The Takeaway

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL - BUT REUSE CAN WORK FOR ALL

Both Tenzin and Fiona, at their own scale, prove that reusable systems don't have to be complicated or scary. When done with intention and community buy in, they're not just sustainable - they're more satisfying, human, and rewarding.

The big fear - that people will stop coming if you remove single-use cups - was totally unfounded.

IF YOU DO WHAT YOU DO REALLY WELL, PEOPLE WILL ALIGN WITH THAT.

Whether you're a cafe owner or a coffee lover, the lesson is clear: change is not only possible - it's contagious.

The A to Z of Reusable Cup Swap Systems in Australia

PP = Polypropylene
OBP= ocean bound plastic

Company	Location	Product	Washing service	Designed for who?	Aussie made	Material	System for reuse
Bettercup	Nationwide	Cups & containers	Yes	Events	No	Polypropylene (PP) or Tritan	Rent or buy with full support: bins, signage, washing, & logistics
Borrow by Huskee	Nationwide	Cups	Yes	Cafes, Events	No	PP	App - customers scan a qr code in the app, return within 14 days, \$3 hold (no charge)
Cercle	Nationwide	Cups & containers	Yes	Offices, Events	No	Stainless steel & PP	Venues rent or buy reuse system with onsite or offsite washing and Drop Pod collection bins
Cercle Reserve	Nationwide	Cups & containers	Yes	Cafes, Events	No	PP	Webapp system for cafes and venues to lease reusables (\$3-5 deposit) to their customers
eCup	Nationwide	Cups	Yes	Events	Yes	PP or ocean bound plastic (OBP)	Venues rent or buy cups for their event, collection points supplied by eCup
GO2CUP	Perth, WA	Cups, plates & bowls	Yes	Cafes, Events	No	PP, melamine, polycarbonate	Rent or buy, self-managed system with support available
Good Reusables	Nationwide	Cups & containers	No	Cafes, Events	Yes	PP, BPA-Free	No app or account, \$3 deposit.
Grounded Goods	Nationwide	Cups & containers	No	Cafes, Events	Yes	PP or Tritan, BPA-free	Suggest charging a small one off fee or a deposit
Grounded Goods Office Kit	Nationwide	Cups & containers	No	Offices	Yes	PP or Tritan, BPA-free	Trust



Company	Location	Product	Washing service	Designed for who?	Aussie made	Material	System for reuse
Huskee Swap	Nationwide	Cups purchase model	No	Misc.	No	PP & coffee husk	App-supported but not required, customers use their own Huskee cups and swap for a fresh cup
Pottery For The Planet	Nationwide	Cups, containers	No	Cafes, Offices	Yes	Ceramic cups & containers, silicon lids	Buy a borrow cup kit. System is managed and owned by the cafe. No ongoing fees
Renome	Nationwide	Cups	No	Cafes	Yes	PP	Cafes buy starter kit. \$5 deposit. No ongoing fees
Replated	Nationwide	Containers	No	Cafes, Offices	Yes	OBP PP, BPA-free	Businesses buy a starter kit and self manage the system. No ongoing fees
Returnr	Nationwide	Cups, bowls, trays, canisters, trays & more	No	Offices	No	Stainless steel, silicon lids	No app or account, \$6 deposit
Revibes	Nationwide	Cups, containers & cutlery	Yes	Events	No	PP, BPA-free, stainless steel or aluminium	Venues rent cups & Revibes provides bins, collection and sorting
Stack-Cup	Nationwide	Cups	Yes	Events	No	PP, BPA-free	Festivals, stadiums can rent or buy cups for their event, recommend a deposit scheme for customers
Wangim Project	Darebin Council, VIC	Cups	No	Cafes	No	Glass cups & PP lids	Borrow a Wangim cup for free and return to any participating cafe
WOSUP	Nationwide	Cups	Yes	Events	No	Lightweight aluminium	Venues and events rent or buy reusable cups, free for customers



YOUR OFFICIAL GUIDE TO *Aussie Swap Systems*

SWAP SYSTEMS FOR CAFES

CLICK ON THE
TITLE TO GO TO
THEIR WEBSITE!



GOOD REUSABLES



Cafes choose a monthly subscription plan that's right for them, starting at \$10/month, including the supply of Good cups.

Customers pay a \$3 deposit when they order which is instantly refunded when the cup is returned at any partner cafe.

The Aussie made cups and lids are highly durable and made for easy commercial washing. Customisation available.

Includes a map of 'Certified Good Cafes' so customers know where to return cups.

BORROW BY HUSKEE



Cafes order a starter pack of Borrow Cups, available in 8oz or 12oz. When customers order, they 'Borrow' a cup and assign a cup to themselves using an App or POS scanner. A \$3 hold is placed on card, but not charged.

Customers can keep the cup up to 14 days, and return to any venue or collection point or the \$3 will be charged.

Cafes pay \$0.20 +gst per cup use. No payment fees or extra fees ever apply.



SWAP SYSTEMS FOR CAFES



GROUNDLED GOODS



A Melbourne-based and female-led BCorp that has been delivering Aussie made, scalable, circular solutions for food and beverage service since 2016.

Cafes can buy custom branded Grounded Goods cups (or the plain version) to start their own swap program.

Their 'Cafe Swap' setup suggests charging a one off fee for each reusable item. Customers borrow an Uppercup and return it on their next visit. Australian-made, ethical, and built to stay in use.

DEVOLVER



Based in Sydney's Northern Beaches, Devolver has recently discontinued their swap model (June 26).

Their containers are now available for sale and for hire (events, catering, conference, festivals and more) around Sydney.



SWAP SYSTEMS FOR CAFES



CERCLE RESERVE



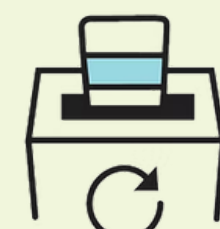
Cafes purchase (\$3 each) or lease bright blue cups. Customers can grab their food and drink in a reusable container or cup at any participating cafe, then drop it back via a drop pod.

Cercle Reserve is a simple, low-tech web app that makes managing your reusables hassle-free in public venues.

With no app download or subscription required, users can easily access reusables and venues are able to manage reusable products worry-free.



Drink it



Drop it



Do it again

WANGIM CUPS



Wangim cups offer a local solution to the community's waste crisis in Darebin City Council. In participating businesses, customers can borrow a Wangim cup at no extra charge and simply return it to any of the cafes in the network.

Wangim aim to create a closed loop cycle of reusable cups while connecting to the local indigenous language, using the Woiwurrung word for 'boomerang'!



SWAP SYSTEMS FOR CAFES



POTTERY FOR THE PLANET

Businesses sign-up as a stockist and place an order for a borrow cups Starter Kit (\$110) including 20 cups, collateral and guidelines to successfully implement the system. Lids can be purchased separately.

Once setup, there is no ongoing fee and the system is self managed by the cafe, who handle the borrow, return and washing of the cups.

RENOME

To join, cafes purchase a starter pack starting at \$50 with different quantities of cups, lids, tokens, collection box and collaterals.

Participating cafes provide beverages in a Renome reusable cup and lid to customers who pay \$5 (\$3 cup, \$2 lid) and receive a token. When cups and lids are returned, customers have the option of keeping their token or a refund of their \$5 deposit.

Tokens are coin sized branded discs that represent a \$5 deposit.



SWAP SYSTEMS FOR EVENTS

GROUNDLED GOODS

Grounded Goods is launching a full range of reusable stadium beer and wine cups.

Designed for closed-loop systems, with end-of-life recycling managed in-house, Grounded Goods supplies branded or unbranded reusables for events, activations, large-scale venues, and stadiums.



REVIBES

Another Aussie reuse system mainly for stadiums, festivals and even airlines.

Revibes provides reusable cups, bowls, and plates with an integrated tracking system.

Partners collect the items and Revibes cleans and recirculates them.

WOSUP

Hospitality and event venues can rent or buy aluminium WOSUP cups to replace single-use plastic. They also run a return system where staff collect used cups in bulk for washing and reuse.

Think of WOSUP like a stadium solution, it's not app-based but completes the circular loop for high-volume drink service.



SWAP SYSTEMS FOR EVENTS



BETTERCUP

Based in Victoria, specialising in reusable cups and food-ware for events and venues.

Since 2018, they've leased or sold stackable cups with optional logos, locally manufactured for quality.

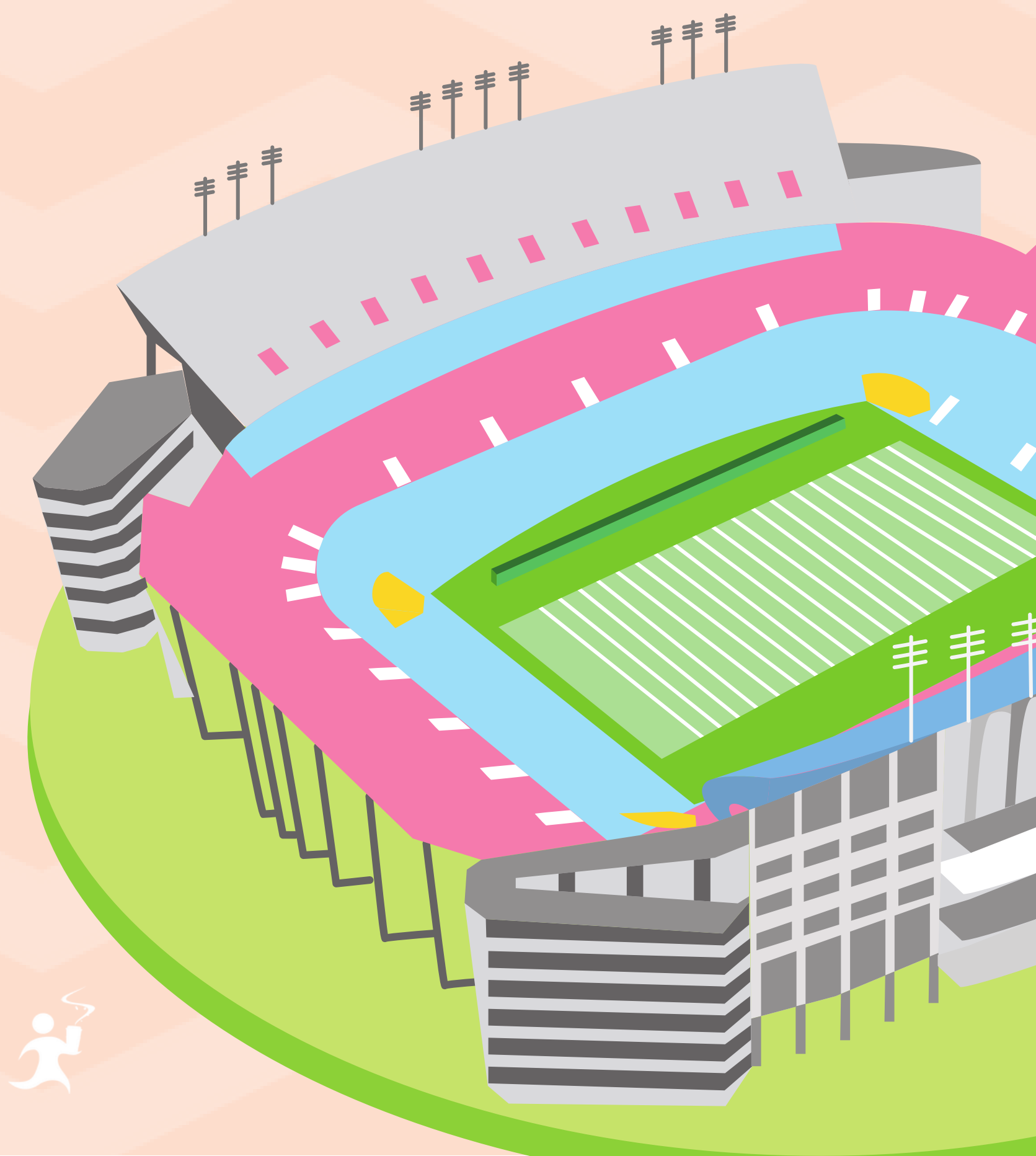
After use, cups are collected, professionally washed, and reused at future events. Bettercup also provides bins, signage, and tailored system design to support smooth, high-return reuse at scale.



STACK-CUP

Stack-Cup (based in Adelaide) is a reusable stadium cup with a patented stackable handle that allows for multiple drinks to be carried in one hand - no trays needed.

Designed for concerts and sports venues, no trays means reduced waste and reduced costs.



SWAP SYSTEMS FOR EVENTS



GO2CUP

A Perth based company that supplies 12oz and 16oz cups, plates and bowls for reuse systems and optional washing service.

Businesses purchase items upfront and GO2CUP supports with implementation.

Their preference is to minimise barriers to reuse (no costs & no apps for a great user experience).

ECUP

An Adelaide based company offering 100% Australian-made reusable cups and systems for events and markets.

eCup's products are 100% closed-loop and are available for venues to rent or purchase. They also provide collection points for returns.



SWAP SYSTEMS FOR OFFICES



GROUNDUP GOODS OFFICE KIT

This is a self-contained station for kitchens: stock it with multiple reusable cups and containers.

Employees simply grab a cup for their coffee, then clean and return it to the station for the next person. The kit includes signage and enough cups for 50+ people.



RETURNR

A broad workplace focused, shared reuse offer that includes reusable cups, bowls, trays, borrowing stations and return pods.

In Returnr's Deposit-Return Network, businesses choose a monthly subscription plan that's right for them (starting at \$52.80/month) and purchase a initial supply of reusable products. Returnr provides training and point-of-sale displays.

Customers borrow reusable cups, bowls and canisters for a low cost, fully refundable cash deposit. Returnr also offers a very extensive range of product customisation to many reuse systems across Australia and internationally.

CERCLE

A workplace-focused cup program free for building tenants with no app or payment.

Coffee drinkers grab a Cercle cup for a brew and then drop it in a 'Drop Pod' when finished. Cercle then collects the cups, washes them, and restocks offices.



MISC SWAP SYSTEMS

MUG LIBRARIES

A DIY approach some cafes adopt. A shelf or basket of spare mugs/cups sits in the cafe that anyone can borrow when they forget their own.

This has no app or deposit - customers simply borrow and later return a mug.

It's low-tech and informal, but it works to nudge habitual reuse and avoid disposables, especially for locals.



HUSKEE SWAP



Geared toward BYO cup users, this is a cup exchange system for people who already have a Huskee Cup.

Participating cafes scan and swap Huskee Cups (the customer gets a fresh one instantly), and customers earn loyalty points.

It's a 'BYO with benefits' model - a rewards scheme for reusing your own Huskee branded cup.



REPLATED



Cafes purchase a rePlated starter kit including 10 units for \$237 and run their own self-managed SWAP & WASH system (great for regulars) or deposit system.

On top of the swap system, rePlated also encourages businesses to sell the container to create ownership and promote BYO.



Special offers for cafes

GROUNDED GOODS

A special 10% off your first order of custom or unbranded cups/containers. Email hello@groundedgoods.com.au with your cup design or logo ideas, and mention Responsible Cafes.

You'll see options for color, branding, or the handy Activation Cup (ideal for returnable programs). They'll help create a solution that fits your business.

**GROUNDED
GOODS**



GOOD REUSABLES

Their system practically pays for itself: Aussie partners save about \$600/month on disposables. **Good Reusables is offering our responsible cafes 3 months free trial of the swap system.**

To join or learn more, contact partners@goodcup.au and mention Responsible Cafes.

They'll walk you through sign-up, set you up for success and can even connect you with a nearby cafe who's already swapped for tips.



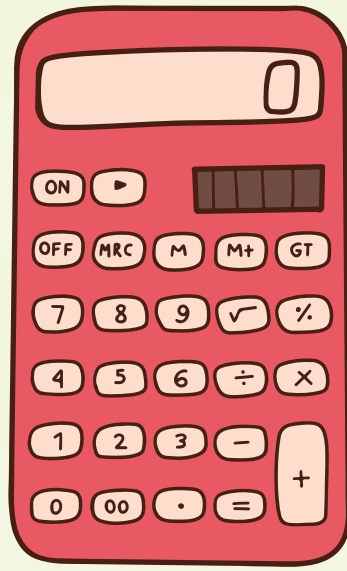
How much can you save by switching to reuse?

GOOD REUSABLES SAVINGS & IMPACT CALCULATOR

Try this online tool to plug in your numbers (cups per day, cost of disposables, etc.).

It will show your potential monthly and yearly savings on waste and money.

Using the calculator is a great way to see how quickly reuse pays off for your cafe.



RENOME SAVINGS CALCULATOR

A great tool for you to enter details about your business and see how much you can save on single use costs.

HUSKEE IMPACT CALCULATOR

Huskee's calculator ('Impact Calculator' on huskee.co) lets cafes and workplaces estimate how much waste and cost they'd cut by switching to Huskee cups.

Just select cup volumes and frequency to see charts of saved cups and dollars - a handy way to justify the change.

Which swap system will you choose?

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL - BUT REUSE CAN WORK FOR ALL

If you made it to the end, we hope this guide has given you a snapshot of how reusable cup swaps work and why they're worthwhile! Every cafe's situation is different, but the evidence is clear: reuse systems can reduce waste, save money, and even boost customer goodwill - often without putting extra pressure on staff.

Start small (a few cups or a trial week), learn the ropes, and see how it fits your routine. The planet - and your profits - will thank you!



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