



More UAE Businesses Commit to Banning Single-Use Plastic

Dubai Airports is the latest business to commit to outlawing single-use plastic in its premises, joining a growing number of UAE companies which are taking a stand against plastic pollution. The firm, which manages both Al Maktoum International Airport and Dubai International Airport, revealed last month that it would be banning items such as shopping bags and cutlery made from plastic from the 1st January 2020.

The announcement is an important one, given the size and standing of Dubai Airports and the influence they may wield over other businesses considering cleaning up their own environmental profile. Until now, the move to transition away from single-use plastics has been largely driven campaign groups, office incentives and small businesses, as well as growing public awareness around the issue.

The tide turning for public opinion

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Climate Change and the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi conducted a survey of almost 2,700 people from all seven emirates, asking them for their view on environmental topics in general and single-use plastics in particular. An overwhelming 98% of respondents said that they believed urgent action was necessary to prevent plastic pollution from becoming an even bigger problem for the country and for the world, while over half said they were willing to pay a premium to subsidise a move away from single-use plastics.

Despite these encouraging statements, the actions of Emiratis do not currently match their words. According to statistics released by the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi, the average UAE resident uses 1,182 plastic shopping bags per year, which equates to more than three per day and almost three times as many as the worldwide average. Meanwhile, nearly three billion plastic bottles are used and discarded in the country every single year, as well.

Serious consequences

There is a price for all this thoughtless plastic pollution. The vast majority of unrecycled items eventually find their way into our seas and oceans, compromising the marine habitat of countless organisms and [jeopardising the very air we breathe](#), as well. Innumerable birds and fish ingest microplastic particles, causing problems in their digestion tracts and often killing them. Indeed, our waste is even becoming



embedded in the very fabric of the underwater landscape, absorbed into coral reefs and lining ocean beds to the detriment of all marine life.

“If we do nothing, there will be more plastic mass than fish in the ocean,” [explained Humaid Abdulla Kanji](#) of the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi. “This needs to change. We don’t have much time and we need to steer the public away from single-use to reusable. We have a very short window to act because we don’t want to end up in a situation where we have an ocean filled with plastic.”