

## Australia raises concern about chemicals in compostable food containers

12 April 2023 | News

**To ensure the safe and sustainable use and disposal of compostable food packaging in Australia**



**To ensure the safe and sustainable use and disposal of compostable food packaging in Australia**

University of Queensland (UQ) researchers in Australia are analysing compostable takeaway food packaging for potentially polluting chemicals.

Associate Professor Sarit Kaserzon from UQ's Queensland Alliance for Environmental Health Sciences (QAEHS) said little is known about the substances used in compostable paper or cardboard products and how they may impact the environment.

Research has already found chemicals such as mineral oils, flame retardants and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in non-compostable paper containers, additives which enhance their structural integrity and resistance to heat, water and grease.

PFAS, synthetic compounds linked to human health problems, are estimated to be present in 40 per cent of food contact papers in the United States of America. The UQ research project aims to understand if similar substances are present in compostable products.

Working closely with government and industry partners, researchers will test compostable and/or biodegradable food contact materials to identify the concentrations of chemicals of concern and then determine the persistence of these chemicals in the organics resource recovery stream.