

Environment Protection Amendment Bill 2019

Plastic Bag Ban



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning



Introduction

Daniel Rojas

Policy Officer, Waste and Resource Recovery, DELWP

Time	Description	Speaker
2:45 – 2:50	Introduction	Daniel Rojas
2:50 – 3:05	What we are doing in Victoria	Helen Millicer
3:05 – 3:25	Update on the Plastic Bag Ban Retailer Campaign and compliance requirements	David Stout
3:25 – 3:35	Detmold Group's Plastic Bag Ban experience	Tom Lunn
3:35 – 3:45	EPA- Plastic Bag Ban Administration Process	Simone Muir
3:45 – 4:25	Q&A	All
4:25 – 4:30	Wrap-up	Daniel Rojas

- **Since the 1960s**, lightweight plastic shopping bags have been provided by retailers free-of-charge in Victoria
- **Benefits:** low-cost, lightweight, strong
- **Volume:** At their peak, Coles and Woolworths alone were giving-away **6.4 billion** lightweight bags across Australia each year

Unintended consequences of lightweight plastic used in large volumes

- Goes easily into the environment in large numbers
- Takes long time to biodegrade, having an impact on the natural environment

As a result, **Global momentum has started to regulate single-use plastics**


2017-18 Public Consultation. 8.000+ respondents. 96% supporting a ban on plastic bags.


Common reasons cited in support of a ban were:


- they harm the **environment** (9.6 million littered p/a in Vic alone)
- they are **resource-intensive** to produce
- they have low rates of reuse and **recycling**
- **alternatives** are readily available.





Plastic bag bans in Australian states and territories 

 Ban in effect (South Australia, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, Queensland, and Western Australia)

 Ban pending (Victoria)

 No ban (New South Wales)

- October 2017 and January 2018 – **Public Consultation**
- June 2018 - **Ban announced**
- October 2018, Better Bag Habits **consumer campaign** released.
- December 2018, Vic Bag Ban **direct retailer engagement campaign** released.
- 19 June 2019, **first reading at Parliament** of the Bill
- 1 November 2019, **Ban is due to commence**



What we are doing in Victoria

Helen Millicer

Manager, Waste and Resource Recovery, DELWP

- a) reduce plastic litter
- b) reduce contamination in kerbside recycling bins
- c) provide increased consistency with other Australian jurisdictions; and
- d) support global momentum around efforts to tackle plastic pollution and transition to a circular economy.

What is banned?

"**banned plastic bag** means—

(a) a bag, other than an exempt plastic bag—

- (i) with handles; and
- (ii) that comprises, either wholly or partly, plastic, whether or not that plastic is biodegradable, degradable or compostable; and
- (iii) that has a thickness of 35 micrometres* or less at any part of the bag; or

(b) a prescribed banned plastic bag;

What is exempt?

exempt plastic bag means—

a bag that comprises, either wholly or partly, plastic that—

- (a) is a barrier bag; or
- (b) is an integral part of the packaging in which goods are sealed or provided for sale; or
- (c) is a prescribed exempt plastic bag;"

* A micrometre is a unit of measurement equal to one millionth of a metre

Bags not banned

- heavyweight reusable plastic bags (*also known as department store or boutique bags*)
- paper bags
- cloth bags
- jute bags
- hessian bags
- kitchen tidy bags
- bin liners
- nappy bags
- dog waste bags
- bags without handles

‘Supply Offence’- Retailer must not provide banned plastic bags

A retailer must not sell or provide a banned plastic bag to a person to carry or transport goods sold or provided by the retailer from the retail premises.

Penalties for both offences

- In the case of a natural person, 60 penalty units (*maximum penalty* - \$9,9131.20);
- In the case of a body corporate, 300 penalty units (*maximum penalty* - \$49,566).

‘Information Offence’ - Provision of false or misleading information relating to banned plastic bags

A retailer or wholesaler, or a manufacturer of plastic bags, must not, whether by act or omission, provide to any other person information that the retailer, wholesaler or manufacturer knows, or should reasonably know, is false or misleading about—

- (a) the composition of a banned plastic bag; or
- (b) whether or not a bag is a banned plastic bag; or
- (c) whether or not a bag is an exempt plastic bag.

False or misleading claims and 'environmentally friendly' bags

According to Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) law

- Businesses are not allowed to make statements that are incorrect or likely to create a false impression.
- It makes no difference whether the business intends to mislead or not.
- **Environmental ('green') claims**
 - May include statements about environmental sustainability, recycling, energy and water efficiency or impact on animals and the natural environment.
 - Businesses making these claims must be able to substantiate them.

Plastic Bag Ban Campaign

To help community and retailers **prepare** for the ban and successfully manage the **transition**.

The Victorian Government released a social media **consumer campaign** through Sustainability Victoria and a **direct retailer engagement** campaign through the NRA

Consumer campaign managed to reach an approx. of 3 millions consumers

When completed, the retailer-engagement campaign will have reached approx. 12.000 retailers

