

Who has already gone plastic bag free?

The momentum is considerable in NSW and in many communities to ban single-use plastic shopping bags. South Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and the A.C.T. have already taken the step –with great outcomes for the environment. On a global level, entire countries including Ireland, Bangladesh, South Africa and China have either banned plastic shopping bags or implemented a levy to reduce consumption.

California was the first State in the USA to introduce a State-wide ban

It's time for action.

What can I use instead of plastic bags?

There are plenty of other options we can use instead of lightweight plastic bags...

... when we go shopping:

Top of the list are reusable bags that we can bring from home, such as bags made from jute, hemp, bamboo, organic cotton, calico, silk, etc. Cardboard boxes are also an option in some shops, such as many fruit & veg shops.

...when we want to line the bin:

Here's a radical thought: do we really need to line our bins? Throw-away items that aren't messy don't need to be in plastic. Rinse out your bin every week or so, and all will be well. You can also use newspaper to wrap garbage before placing it in the bin.

If you feel that you really need a bin liner, you can purchase biodegradable and 100% compostable bin liners. (AS 4736-2006)

You can also use bread and cereal bags to wrap up messy things before you put them in your bin (so you know, these types of plastic bags can also be recycled at most major supermarkets and made into furniture, bollards etc).

... when we pick up dog poo

Dog poo bags are provided on rolls by Council at popular walking spots, like off-leash beaches. We can also use any of the many, many other types of plastic bags from around the home, like the bags we buy beans or bread in ('barrier bags'). Better still, use corn starch bags.

... when we want to carry wet or dirty things

Take a look around your home and check out all the different types of plastic bags you have lying around. We all collect more than we realise! For example, we're bound to have 'boutique style' plastic bags (these are thicker than checkout plastic bags) from the last time we bought clothes or other items.

REMEMBER: BYO BAGS!



Cover image taken on Coalcliff Beach. **Inside images** a suburban street on bin day, 26 plastic shopping bags were found within 300m of a stormwater drain in one afternoon and a plastic shopping bag drifts down the Hacking River on its way to the ocean.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Australians throw out more than **7,000** plastic bags per minute
- Each year in Australia, about **50 million** plastic bags don't make it to landfill, instead ending up in the environment
- They are **not bio degradable** and can take up to 1,000 years to break down
- Plastic bag litter **kills** sea birds, whales, seals and turtles
- Plastic shopping bags have already been **banned** in parts of Australia, as well as throughout entire countries.
- 'Free' plastic bags are not in fact free. About **\$100 million** was added to grocery bills in 2007 for plastic bags given away at the checkout.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



Australians use more than 4 billion plastic checkout-style shopping bags a year – all of them made from fossil fuels. These bags are often used only for minutes, but take hundreds of years to break down. Even if we use them as bin liners, we are still throwing them out. Is that the smartest use of precious non-renewable resources?

NSW is a beautiful place to live and visit. It's recognised as a place of great natural beauty and we need to keep it this way. Plastic bags (whether intentionally or not) often end up as litter, polluting our beaches, breaking down into tiny pieces in the ocean and killing marine life.

We've become so used to having plastic bags offered to us at every turn that we see it as normal and don't even question it. But if we stop and think about it, it's crazy. The truth is we've fallen into bad habits, and we need to change them.



PLASTIC BAG FREE NSW



It is clear that we have to make our lives less plastic.

Since 2000 we have produced more plastic than during the entire 20th century. To produce the approximately 4 billion plastic bags Australians used last year, vast amounts of non-renewable fossil fuels were used. Millions of bags end up on beaches, in rivers and other parts of our natural environment.

As a result of the public support Bunnings and other stores have decided to ban plastic bags on a national basis.

Plastic Bag Free NSW is calling on the NSW government introduce a ban on single use plastic bags as a first step to reduce the serious effects of plastic pollution.

