

1 March 2018

Plastic Bag Ban
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
Locked Bag 33
CLOISTERS SQUARE WA 6850

Via email: plasticbagban@dwer.wa.gov.au

DISCUSSION PAPER – IMPLEMENTING A LEIGHTWEIGHT SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAG BAN IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 'Implementing a lightweight single-use plastic bag ban in Western Australia' discussion paper.

Coles notes the commitment by the Western Australian Government to ban single-use lightweight plastic shopping bags. As a major food and grocery retailer, Coles understands the importance of leadership on environmental sustainability. We are proud of the initiatives already underway in our stores to reduce the use of plastics and to encourage more effective recycling.

In July 2017, Coles announced that it would phase out single-use plastic bags from all Coles businesses within 12 months in favour of more sustainable options. This initiative will mean that stores in Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria will align with the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania where single-use plastic bags are already banned.


Coles phase out of single use plastic bags will be implemented nationally, including in Western Australia. One challenge for national suppliers and retailers is to ensure consistency and uniformity across borders. Coles therefore recommends that the Western Australian Government adopts a standard approach with other jurisdictions in relation to banning plastic bags with a thickness of less than 35 microns.


Many of our customers have told us that they like the convenience of single-use bags, including because they have multiple uses, and expressed concern about the financial impact of bag charges. Coles believes it is important to retain a low cost option for our customers and provides a range of reusable bag options at different price points for sale. Our current range is available in all States and Territories and starts at 15c for a reusable and recyclable bag and includes \$1 and \$2 reusable bags in a range of materials, as well as reusable insulated chiller bags for \$2.50.

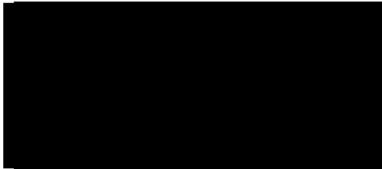
Other bag options currently available, such as paper or natural materials like cotton, may have a less positive environmental impact overall (including durability, materials, production costs and transport costs) than other bag options. This has informed Coles' focus on ensuring reusable bag options for our customers.

In addition, as part of our commitment to better environmental outcomes, Coles also offers recycling bins for soft plastics in more than 720 of our stores with plans for bins in all stores by mid-March. This is the largest retailer-operated recycling program of its type in Australia. Through the program, known as REDcycle, customers are able to recycle plastic bags and soft plastic packaging at their nearest Coles store. The plastic material is converted into new products, including outdoor furniture.

Coles looks forward to our continued engagement with the Western Australian Government and the Department throughout the implementation of this initiative.

Should you wish to discuss Coles' submission please contact me directly 


Yours sincerely,


Catherine Macneil
Policy and Regulatory Affairs Manager
Coles