

Submission on implementing a lightweight single-use plastic bag ban in Western Australia

Details and capacity of submitter

Max Hipkins, [REDACTED]

This submission is made in the capacity of a consumer and local government representative.

Submission

I have read the discussion paper and attended a community workshop. I also have the benefit of research carried out by the City of Nedlands to reduce use of plastic bags.

My initial comments are:

- to describe the bags that are to be banned as “single-use” when 72% of them are reused, is misleading;
- there was no definition, either in the discussion paper or at the workshop, of the material the “plastic bag” is made of;
- whether or not the plastic bag has handles has nothing to do with the problems that it causes; and
- in fact, without denying their benefits, all plastics cause problems, not only lightweight plastic bags.

Years ago, in an attempt to reduce the impact of plastic bag use, the City of Nedlands worked with a manufacturer and conducted field trials on compostable dog waste bags. At marginal extra cost an organic, fully compostable bag was sourced (that could be disposed of in worm farms). This is currently being used by the City.

My household reuses lightweight plastic shopping bags as bin liners. If these lightweight bags are no longer available I will probably try to reuse lightweight barrier bags as bin liners. If I am forced to use heavier bin liners or garbage

bags, these will take longer to decompose and cause even greater pollution than lightweight bags.

Summary and Recommendations

1. Yes, I am concerned are you about lightweight plastic bags polluting our waterways, harming wildlife, persisting in landfill and consuming resources.
2. I support a State-wide ban on light-weight plastic shopping bags made from hydrocarbons; however compostable bags made from organic materials should not be included in the ban.
3. Plastic dog waste bags should be included in the ban.
4. Plastic bin liners should be included in the ban.
5. National consistency in regulations can hamper innovation and progress and is less important than adopting the best and fairest regulations.

Max Hipkins, Mayor
City of Nedlands

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