



LIGHTWEIGHT PLASTIC BAGS

WA's ban on lightweight plastic bags is helping to combat plastic waste across Western Australia.

Billions of plastic shopping bags are distributed worldwide each year – but only a small percentage are recycled or reused. Most are used only once and then discarded.

Plastic bags also have a long lifespan – typically decades, often far longer – and although they make up only a small portion of our solid waste, they can have a devastating impact on our natural and marine environments and our wildlife.

Even degradable bags never completely decompose. Instead, they break down into smaller pieces, known as microplastics.



THE FACTS

- Every piece of plastic ever made in the world still exists today.
- Australians use more than six billion plastic bags a year.
- Western Australians used 670 million lightweight plastic bags in 2017 – seven million of these were littered.
- Plastic bags are used for an average of 12 minutes each.
- A single plastic bag has a life expectancy of 1,000 years.
- Only 3% of plastic bags used in Australia are recycled.

WA'S BAG BAN

Western Australia's ban on lightweight plastic bags started on 1 July 2018, bringing our state into line with most other states and territories who also have similar bans in place.

The ban applies to all lightweight plastic bags with handles, 35 microns or less, and includes degradable, biodegradable and compostable plastic bags.

The ban applies to *all* retailers in Western Australia, including food retailers, market stall holders and supermarkets. It also applies to plastic bags supplied with online purchases sourced within Western Australia.

Shoppers must remember to take reusable bags with them when they shop – such as fabric bags, hessian bags, green (non-woven polypropylene) bags or insulated cooler bags – or look to other alternatives like a cardboard box or a paper bag. Others may prefer to load up a pram or bike basket or put the contents of a shopping trolley straight into the car.

Fruit and vegetable bags, nappy bags, freezer bags, 'dog poo' bags and single-purpose bin liner bags are all still available – but try to consider alternatives before you reach for these.

Learn more about WA's lightweight plastic bag ban at whatsyourbagplan.wa.gov.au