

Plastic Bag Ban
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
Locked Bag 33
Cloisters Square WA 6000

The Government's plan to implement a ban on plastic bags is to be commended and I add my voice in congratulating the initiative.

It needs to be the first positive step in what, for the sake of all the deleterious reasons itemised in the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's Discussion Paper, should be an ongoing plan to ban not only light-weight single-use plastic bags, but biodegradable /degradable, compostable and plastic 'doggie' bags. In my opinion the ban should also be extended to include equally polluting heavier plastic bags and other products that leave a dense environmental footprint, such as the relatively newly introduced packaging of foods, fruits and vegetables in plastic based/plastic covered, produce trays. This type of packaging adds to the plague of polluting plastic, which quickly finds its way to land-fill or precious waterways from the moment the produce is unpacked onto the kitchen bench.

There are environmentally safe alternatives, which include a number of products that are using non-fossil fuel materials for bags and wraps, such as starch and waxed wrapping materials. Once plastic bags are banned such innovative solutions will grow exponentially. In the meantime we also have the modest cardboard box.

It has been years since I have used plastic bags and as a consequence my house is lighter! Instead of plastic I have reusable hessian/calico shopping bags and use lightweight mesh bags for fruits and vegetables. Waste can be significantly reduced by investing in a worm farm or a bokashi bin and what waste *is* surplus can be efficiently wrapped in newspaper for disposal in the council household-waste bin, nullifying the need or use of bin liners.

Hopefully with the installation of the plastic bag ban, there will be a growth of awareness, strengthened by the ability of the community to think differently and positively towards waste and its dire impact on our 'waterways, oceans, wildlife and landfill sites'.

If this desired outcome is realised, it will be necessary to provide ongoing research of enduring and sustainable alternatives - that are not going to leave a dearth of negative problems for future generations.

It is a great opportunity for the government of Western Australia to be in the vanguard of developing exciting and environmentally sustainable ideas to reduce the negative impact of pollutants on our environment for today and tomorrow.



Erica Dearle

