

Attadale, March 8, 2018

Object : Written submission presented in regards to the Plastic Bag Ban

Hello,

As mentioned in the object, I would like to present a written submission in regards with the Plastic Bag Ban.

I find the current waste crisis very alarming and I dare to hope that the Waste Authority will act with leadership and provide sound advices to the government to put measures in place to really tackle the waste situation. Advices that go beyond waste management but tackle the production processes of all goods and services, including packaging that we consume as they all eventually end up as waste. And of course, advices on the need for recurrent awareness campaigns that reach all ages, all sectors of activities, all socio-economics levels, in all aspects of life such as home, work and leisure time.

Plastic pollution is of great concern. A plastic bag ban will become effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 and a container deposit scheme (CDS) will be put in place in 2019. Both of these are very good beginnings however, other similar actions are required.

Because 95% of plastic packaging is used once and then thrown away, the Waste Authority should advise the government of Western Australia on the need to elaborate *A Plastic Pollution Reduction Strategy* for WA including actions, objectives and given timeframes. Actions within the Strategy should include at least the following :

In respect with the Plastic Bag Ban :

1. Biodegradable, degradable and compostable bags should be included in the ban. Given the characteristics of the 3 different bags, as explained on page 14 of the paper and considering that the impacts on the environment and on the wildlife are unlikely to be improved by a switch to degradable plastics or compostable bags, the Western Australian Government should include these bags in the ban.
2. The single-use lightweight plastic bag ban should be extended to heavier department store plastic bags. As mentioned on page 13 of the paper, the result of a recent cost benefit analysis of plastic bag ban options found that the greatest benefit would be derived from a ban on lightweight and heavier plastic bags. There would be no net economic cost to such a ban. This would also avoid the unintended consequence of retailers supplying heavier weight plastic bags for free after the ban is being implemented. Finally, if heavier weight plastic bags are used as an alternative to lightweight plastic bags, the amount of plastic in the waste stream may increase. A shift from lightweight to heavyweight plastic bags may increase the costs of waste services provided by local governments.
3. Plastic barrier bags for unpacked perishable food should be included in the ban. Alternatives to plastic barrier bags should be available at grocery stores for consumers to buy or be given by the retailers, for a period of time.
4. Community education should be provided on alternatives to plastic used around the house (newspaper, plastic bread bags, etc). In South Australia, a plastic bag ban was introduced in 2008. A review of the ban in

2011 found an increase in bin liner used by households after the ban from 15% to 80% as they couldn't reuse their single use plastic bags for that purpose anymore.

5. At the moment, paper and cardboard bags are not included in the ban. As mentioned in the paper on page 21, single use paper bags have high environmental impact. This is partially offset by the use of recycled content, but the high energy costs associated with their production, combined with their single-use, makes them less than ideal as an alternative to single-use plastic bags. To avoid the potential situation where retailers selling goods other than food, turn to paper or cardboard bags instead of encouraging consumers to use their own reusable bags when shopping, shouldn't these bags (paper and cardboard) be banned too? Or at last shouldn't a phase out of such bags be planned?

Along with the Plastic Bag Ban, other products should be banned or phased out :

1. Set a program for the future phase-out of single use, non-biodegradable takeaway items by 2020 (coffee cups/lids, straws, takeaway utensils, takeaway containers and food ware and water bottles).
2. A ban on polystyrene takeaway containers and food ware should be put in place immediately.
3. The use and release of balloons (helium filled or not) in outdoor spaces should be banned due to harms caused to wildlife. This ban should be put in place immediately.
4. Western Australia and Australia need facilities to process recyclable material recovered from the different waste streams and foster a vibrant resource recovery and recycling economic sector.
5. Containers collected through the container deposit scheme (CDS) should be recycled into containers of their original form, here in WA or Australia and sold to manufacturers using these containers here such as Coca Cola, Coca Cola Amatil, Pepsico, etc. Doing so, would foster greater economic activity and returns here in WA. This approach would be more aligned to the circular economy model instead of simply processing the material to remove contamination and then sell it overseas to be further processed. As an example, Coca Cola drink bottles are 100% recyclable, including the lid. Unfortunately, each new bottle contains only 25% recycled material. Food grade, 100% recycled bottle is achievable with the right CDS and the right recycling facilities. It has been rolled-out for a number of years in the U.K. by a number of soft drink brands such as Suntory's Ribena. Why can't we do the same here in WA and Australia?

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Isabelle Gagnon





