

Addendum Report

REPORTS THROUGH THE GENERAL MANAGER

REPORTS FROM THE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

a23 [CNR-CM] Support the Removal of Single Use Plastic Bags

SUBMITTED BY: Waste Management

mhm



Leaving a Legacy
Looking out for future generations

LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK:

- 1 Leaving a Legacy
- 1.3 Utility Services
- 1.3.1 Rubbish and Recycling Services - To collect, recycle and dispose of residential and commercial waste, manage landfill sites and deliver community education so as to divert rubbish from landfill.

ROLE: Advocate

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

The Environment Ministers from the various State Governments are meeting at the end of July to discuss banning single use light weight plastic bags. Four of the seven states and territories have already banned them with only NSW, Victoria and Western Australia still allowing the use of them.

Council has identified the potential removal of single use plastic bags as a key initiative which is to be focused on in the next six months and would be supportive of writing to the NSW Premier and Environment Minister to support the phased removal of single use plastic bags from use.

If the State Government chooses to ban them, it is recommended that Council lobby for support toward an education campaign to encourage residents to use reusable bags and or biodegradable bags as an alternative that will minimise any potential impact on the environment.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council writes to the NSW Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP and Environment Minister, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP, to support the banning of single use light weight plastic bags.

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REPORT:

Following the recent ABC Program, "*War on Waste*", a much higher focus has been placed on the use of single use plastic bags at shopping centres as being a significant environmental issue with millions of bags making their way into either landfills or the environment every year. These bags are directly responsible for the death of millions of sea animals every year around the world and for a significant portion of marine and land pollution. An evaluation of residual waste across other regions that have implemented organics services indicates that single use plastic bags make up to 18.5% of the residual waste which is disposed of into landfill, although no definitive audit has been undertaken on Tweed's residual waste stream.

Council's Integrated Waste Strategy has identified that the pursuit of waste diversion opportunities is a key objective once the collection and procession of food and garden organics from household has been introduced. This has now been implemented and the opportunity to avoid the generation of waste should be pursued as a priority over processing and diversion as the avoidance of the generation of waste is preferable to diversion because this saves valuable resources.

Supermarkets Coles and Woolworths have recently announced plans to phase out single use plastic bags over the next 12 months with the decision to affect stores in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. South Australia, ACT, the Northern Territory and Tasmania have already implemented bans, and Queensland plan to do so next year. Aldi has already implemented a ban.

The Environment Ministers of the various State Governments are meeting at the end of July to discuss the banning of single use light weight plastic bags. Council has the opportunity to write to the Premier and Environment Minister to express our support for the ban.

If the State Government chose to ban them, it is recommended that Council lobby for support toward an education campaign to encourage residents to make the necessary behavioural change to use reusable bags and or biodegradable bags as an alternative that will minimise the impact on the environment.

OPTIONS:

Council has the option of either:

1. Writing to the NSW Premier and Environment Minister to show our support for the banning of single use light weight plastic bags.
2. Not lobbying the NSW Premier and Environment Minister to have single use plastic bags banned.

CONCLUSION:

The Environment Ministers from the various State Governments are meeting toward the end of July to consider banning single use light weight plastic bags. The banning of these is in

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line with Council objectives in our Integrated Waste Strategy which place a focus on the diversion and avoidance of waste from landfill.

Both Coles and Woolworths have indicated that they propose to phase out the use of single use light weight plastic bags over the next 12 months with these being the largest generators of these bags. Single use plastic bags have already been banned in South Australia, ACT, the Northern Territory and Tasmania.

Council has an opportunity to write to the NSW Premier and Environment Minister to support the banning of light weight single use plastic bags and encouraging the NSW Government introduce a ban.

COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS:

a. Policy:

Corporate Policy Not Applicable

b. Budget/Long Term Financial Plan:

Not Applicable.

c. Legal:

Not Applicable.

d. Communication/Engagement:

Not Applicable.

UNDER SEPARATE COVER/FURTHER INFORMATION:

Nil.

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