

Is your business ready for the Victorian bag ban?

Local businesses are being urged to get prepared ahead of the state-wide ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags including compostable, degradable and biodegradable plastics, which is due to commence from November this year.

This new law will apply to all retailers and suppliers regardless of size or type – from supermarkets to fashion boutiques, from fast food outlets to petrol stations.

In the past Victorians have used over 1 billion plastic shopping bags every year. The majority of these bags end up in landfill and around 10 million end up as litter, polluting the environment and endangering wildlife.

“The Victorian Government has engaged the National Retailers Association (NRA) to work with Victorian businesses in preparing for the ban.”

NRA Manager of Policy, David Stout, said that it is vital that all businesses are up to speed with their responsibilities.

“Retailers and suppliers who do not comply with the new laws will face penalties and risk disrupting their business and upsetting customers if they fail to prepare for the transition.

“All businesses currently using plastic shopping bags face important business decisions over the next few months.

“For many businesses, giving a free plastic bag to every customer incurs substantial cost and current sentiment presents an opportunity to reconsider that habit.

“There is a wide range of alternatives out there now, and each choice could either increase or reduce business costs, not to mention impact on consumer perception of their business.

“Retail businesses have until November to use up their existing stocks of lightweight plastic shopping bags, Mr Stout said.

Free support for Victorian businesses preparing for plastic bag ban

Mr Stout said that the NRA has partnered with the Victorian Government to help retailers navigate the new laws, advise on alternative bags, and minimise negative impacts on businesses.

“We’re currently visiting over 100 shopping precincts across the state to inform retailers about how the ban affects them and what they can do to minimise any inconvenience to their business and customers.

“We’ve also launched a dedicated website, www.vicbagban.com.au, that offers businesses all the information and resources they need to start preparing for the ban,” Mr Stout said.

“We encourage all Victorian businesses to access and use these free resources as soon as possible to help inform their decisions about alternatives, as well as helping them to educate their team and prepare their customers.

Mr Stout noted that the NRA is also offering a dedicated Tollfree Bag Ban Hotline (1800 817 723) for retailers who need more information or advice.

For more information on the NRA's tour locations and times, business owners should visit www.vicbagban.com.au or call the NRA's Bag Ban Hotline on 1800 817 723 for free advice.

Additionally, the Victorian Government has also launched the 'Better Bag Habits' campaign. It calls on Victorians to remember their bag, wallet, keys and phone – to the tune of the 'heads, shoulders, knees and toes' rhyme.

For more information on the Victorian Government's public campaign visit [Better bag habits - Sustainability Victoria](#).

For an overview of the Victorian Government's approach to waste and recycling, in particular plastics and plastic bags visit [Reducing the impacts of plastic pollution – Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning](#).

The National Retail Association is Australia's largest and most representative retail industry association. It has been serving businesses in the retail and fast food sectors for close to 100 years.

David Stout is available for interviews. Contact Mr Stout at d.stout@nra.net.au or 0409 926 066.