



Barrier bags consultation fact sheet

April 2024

This fact sheet details the proposed timeline, scope and design standards that will be incorporated into the Environmental Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulations 2018 (the Regulations), which will apply to the sale and supply of prescribed plastic barrier bags in Western Australia.

Please consider the content of this fact sheet and provide feedback as outlined in the attached consultation letter.

All feedback must be returned to the department before 4pm Monday 20 May 2024.

What is proposed to be banned, and when?

The sale and supply of non-compostable plastic produce bags for loose fruit, vegetables, nuts and confectionary will be banned from **1 September 2024**.

The sale and supply of compostable plastic produce bags that do not meet the design standards established in the Regulations will be banned from **1 July 2025**. This ban will also apply to loose/unpackaged meat, seafood and dairy products from this date.

Proposed design standard for consultation

It is currently proposed that from 1 July 2025, all single-use certified compostable barrier bags sold and supplied in Western Australia must meet these requirements.

Volume	8 L minimum capacity for all standard barrier bags Ziplock or sealable barrier bags for loose bulk food and confectionary are exempt from this size requirement.
Opacity	The bag must not be opaque.
Bag colour	Green or white tinting pigment can be applied to the bag film.
Composting certification	The entire item, as representative of the final product, must be certified to the Australian composting standard AS4736-2006: Biodegradable plastics suitable for composting and other microbial treatment.
Ink colour	The ink used to print on the surface of the bag's film must be black and/or green. Note: The rate of ink application must be represented in the composting certification.
Printing requirements	All barrier bags must display the seedling logo (signifying the product's compliance to AS4736) and have the word 'compostable' in large bold font on both sides of the bag. Additional words are encouraged for the householder instructing use as an organics caddy bag.
Handles	Bags cannot have handles.

Please note this design standard does not apply to plastic-free single-use alternatives or reusable alternatives.

Why ban non-compostable barrier bags?

Western Australians used 115 million produce bags in 2021. Most end up in landfills, but many are littered in the environment, harming our wildlife. There are no recycling options for barrier bags in Western Australia, and conventional plastic barrier bags often contaminate recycling and FOGO (food organics and garden organics) collection streams. Contaminated streams unfortunately then end up in landfill.

What is not included in the ban?

- compostable plastic barrier bags that have achieved an Australian industrial composting standard (AS 4736:2006)
- reusable barrier bags made from plastic fabric such as polyester or nylon
- barrier bags supplied by bakeries or for the sale of loose baked goods
- produce pre-packaged off the premises (e.g. grape bags)
- bags sold on-shelf (e.g. packets of freezer bags).

What alternatives are there?

Customers can bring their own reusable bags or place loose produce directly into their basket. Retailers may provide disposable alternatives such as compliant compostable barrier bags, paper bags or boxes.

Who will the ban apply to?

The ban applies to all businesses, manufacturers, retailers and distributors that sell or supply barrier bags for loose/unpackaged fruit, vegetables, nuts, confectionery, meat, seafood and dairy products in Western Australia.

Further information for retailers and suppliers is available at plasticsbanwa.com.au or the National Retail Association toll free hotline on 1800 817 723 (9am to 5pm AWST weekdays).

