

Woolworths announces 'plastic bag free' store

Woolworths has announced that it is launching a new in-store reusable bag trial.



Woolworths' storefront. Image supplied.

The trial aims to test whether, given a choice of a more affordable reusable bag, consumers will make the shift away from buying single-use plastic shopping bags.

Starting on 5 November 2018, these new, entry-level, reusable shopping bags will be made available in four stores across the Western Cape (V&A Waterfront, Palmyra, Pinelands and Steenberg). Significantly one store, Woolworths Steenberg, will be completely plastic bag free for the duration of the trial, with customers having the choice of either purchasing a reusable bag or bringing their own bags. In the remaining three stores, the current single-use plastic bags will still be available

Zero packaging waste to landfill

In June, Woolworths communicated its vision of achieving zero packaging waste to landfill and its commitment that all of its packaging will be recyclable or reusable by 2022. This is an ambitious target as most international retailers and producers with a similar commitment have set their sights on 2025.



Woolworths announces plan to phase out nonrecyclable plastic packaging

5 Jun 2018



"This reusable bag trial is an opportunity for us to gauge customer reaction, feedback and input that will inform the greater phasing out of single-use plastics," says Feroz Koor, Woolworths Holdings group head of sustainability. "There is a wide range of views and different levels of awareness of the issues which need to be understood so that we can take this journey to zero waste to landfill hand-in-hand with all our customers."

While many Woolies customers give voice to their own plastic pollution concerns, South Africans, like the rest of the world, have been relatively slow to transform to the more environmentally-friendly reusable options. Research has shown that the lightweight plastic bag levy introduced in 2003 has not curbed the country's plastic shopping bag consumption.



Woolworths trials recycling vending machine in Cape Town store

8 Aug 2018



Helping consumers choose reusable bags

When you consider that Woolworths currently sells about 140 million plastic bags a year, which is between six to seven tonnes of plastic, helping consumers choose reusable bags will make a significant impact on reducing plastic waste.

The new R5.50 reusable, recyclable shopping bag is locally-made from recycled materials by Isikwama, Woolworths long-standing black enterprise development supplier, which has grown into a 100-employee strong organisation over the past eight years.

Woolworths Steenberg, surrounded by the natural beauty of the Cape Town southern suburbs, is ideal to test consumer reaction to the ultimate phasing out of single-use plastics.

“There’s an opportunity here for the Woolies Steenberg to play an important role by engaging with customers in a close-knit, eco-friendly community, gathering their views and having real conversations,” says Koor. “As South Africans, we ultimately all want the same thing – a more sustainable country that protects its extraordinary natural heritage in our lifetimes, and for future generations.”

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