

AUST. COMPETITION &
CONSUMER COMMISSION
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SUBMISSION TO THE ACCC RE PLASTIC BAGS

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change Gavin Jennings has stated that from the 1st of August there will be a 10 cent levy on plastic bags used in Coles, Safeway, and IGA stores in Narre Warren, Warnambool, and Wangaratta allegedly to see how shoppers respond to being charged for every plastic bag that they use; even more intriguing is the fact that the results of this so called trial will be established by The Australian National Retailers Association *of which Coles, Safeway, and IGA may be members*. This is not to say the trial will be biased against the public.

No details have been given as to how this trial will be conducted and how the success or failure of it will be measured.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission have stated that retailers will not profit from the sale of plastic bags during the trial, and that this is the *simplist* way to reduce plastic bag use. *Now that does sound simple*.

Coles, Safeway and IGA supermarkets will be only too happy to help the Government Initiate a scheme which will result in the public paying for bags instead of supplying them in order to increase their profit margin. Last year Safeways increased their profit margin by a massive 25%. This *was* their customers money!

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change Gavin Jennings has stated that this levy, {read tax}, represents the first practical action by any State Government to reduce the use of plastic bags. Could he be referring to the expected satisfactory trial results or an objective to expand the plastic bag charge to every sales outlet in the State,.

It may even be the forerunner of a charge for plastic bottles of water, soft drink Fruit juice, & milk; besides potatoes, fruit, and food. Now that is a taxing question!

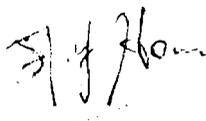
If the Minister, the ACCC, and ANRA are really looking for a simple answer to reducing plastic bags, the answer is bio-degradable bags. Why does the Government spend massive amounts of taxpayers money to look into an obvious simple solution?

It has been reported that China is importing five and a half million Australian produced bio-degradable bags for the Olympics. You may well ask why our own Government has not taken steps to Legislate that our sales outlets must use bio-degradable bags in place of plastic ones, instead of forcing the public to pay for unnecessary plastic bags. Bio-degradable bags are already being used in some countries.

The above stores sell CHINESE GREEN BAGS THAT ARE DESIGNATED "ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY" On a T.V. programme last week it was stated that these green bags are made from materials that will -NEVER EVER-- breakdown. If this is correct what happens to these bags when they get worn out by use or damaged by the sharp corners of cartons. If this statement is correct can this be termed false advertising? if so why isn't the Minister taking action to restrict the sale and import of these bags, and thereby improve the environment for future generations.?

Yours truly.

A.J.Horn.



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Newsopinion

Get smart on carry bags

WITH a Melbourne company winning the contract to supply biodegradable carry bags and bin liners at the Beijing Olympics ("Oly deal in the bag", July 8), why can't Australians have the use of the same bags?

This would eliminate the need for a plastic bag levy, and also reduce our use of fossil fuels.

Lorraine Broderick, Dallas

Let's have what they're having

CHEERS to China's Olympic body for buying 5.5 million biodegradable bags from an Australian company.

Thumbs down to government bodies and supermarkets in Australia that don't or won't encourage us to do the same.

Heather Purvis, Hamilton

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Sham or shame?

FURTHER to the subject of plastic shopping bags, I now read that China is importing five and a half million Australian-produced, bio-degradable bags for the Olympics.

You may well ask why our Government has not taken steps to legislate that our sales outlets must use bio-degradable bags in place of plastic ones, instead of forcing the public to pay for unnecessary plastic bags.

These are already being used in other countries.

Coles and Woolworths are only too happy to initiate a scheme to make the public pay for bags instead of supplying them, in order to increase their enormous profit of 25 per cent for the past year.

Nobody seems to know the views of our local state Labor MP Luke Donnellan or federal Liberal MP Jason Wood on this subject.

We also have not heard a word from Casey Council on this matter. Several months ago I contacted Casey councillor Mick Morland on the subject of household waste disposal and whether plastic bags should be phased out, and was told that he had not thought about the matter but considered that the public would have to buy jumbo plastic bags such as those sold by Coles and Safeway stores.

In effect, we will be substituting small plastic bags for extra-large, thick, plastic bags, again at an extra cost to the public and profit to these companies.

Will customers also have to pay an extra 10 cents for each of these jumbo bags at the checkout?

What is the view of the council on this matter?

Do we now put waste directly into rubbish bins? The ratepayers deserve an answer now.

The above stores also sell Chinese green bags that are designated "environmentally friendly".

On a TV program this week it was stated that these green bags are made from materials that will never break down. If this is correct, what happens to these bags when they get worn out or damaged by the sharp corners of cartons?

What do Coles and Woolworths intend to do with money from the sale of these bags, which, it appears, are not and never will be environmentally friendly? If this is correct is this false advertising?

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings, has stated that the levy on plastic bags represents the first practical action by any state government to reduce their use.

Why has the minister decided to ignore the use of bio-degradable bags, which would automatically reduce the number of plastic bags, which he states is his ultimate objective?

After this so-called trial it may be expected that the minister will eventually introduce a charge throughout Victoria for plastic bags of vegetables and fruit, and plastic bottles of soft drink, water and milk, etc, giving his government more tax.

This is the same minister who raised the pensioners' road tax by 50 per cent "in order to help the needy". Shades of Robin Hood!

A. J. Horn.
Narre Warren.

Cc: Darren Hinch, Channel 7 T.V, Editors of local & Country newspapers, Gavin Jennings, MP, the ANRA, the ACCC. etc etc