



Plastic bags are typically used for a short period of time, but take hundreds of years to break down in landfill. A highly visible form of litter, they often end up in our streets, parks and waterways, harming marine and other wildlife that digest them, or get tangled.

Plastic Bag Fact Sheet

Did you know?

- Australians use 4.5 billion plastic shopping bags per annum, with 1% ending up as litter in our streets, parks and beaches.
- Plastic bags are considered to be a 'free' commodity. However the real cost to households is \$10 to \$15 per year is added to the price of goods that they purchase.
- Australians use 13 million plastic bags a day.
- It only takes 4 grocery trips for an average Australian family to accumulate 60 plastic shopping bags.
- Australians throw away about 4,000 recyclable plastic bags a minute, with 230,000 recyclable plastic supermarket bags dumped in landfill every hour.
- Plastic bags can be recycled and turned into new products such as park benches and fence posts.
- Plastic bags can contaminate compost material, reducing its value, and staying in the environment long after the compost has broken down.

Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index Results on Plastic Bags

In the recent Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Count, the overall proportion of plastic shopping bags found in the plastic litter stream accounted for 4%* (average excludes Tas).

The results in the graph below demonstrate the findings on plastic bags in each of the key catchment sites. Highways are the largest catchment areas for these types of bags. The figures also show state by state comparisons and reflect the areas of improvement required for each state.

Number of Supermarket Type Light Weight Carry Bags by Site Type

