

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### PREPARING FOR THE VICTORIAN BAG BAN

Gippsland retailers are preparing for the upcoming state-wide ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags.

The ban, due to commence from 1 November 2019, will include compostable, degradable and biodegradable plastics.

Until recently, Victorians have used over 1 billion single-use plastic shopping bags every year. Most of these bags end up in landfill and around 10 million end up as litter, polluting the environment and endangering wildlife.

According to Matthew Peake, executive officer with Resource Recovery Gippsland, 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.

“Over the past 12 months or so, the practice of reducing reliance on single-use plastic bags has been taken on board by the community and the habit of taking along reusable bags for shopping is taking hold.”

“This resulted from a number of major outlets taking it upon themselves to phase out single-use plastic bags; drawing focus to the issue and influencing behaviour change in their customers and other smaller retailers. Now, all businesses and shoppers will need to rethink their approach, embrace alternatives to single-use bags and reduce the habit of relying on plastic.”

The Victorian ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags aligns with the government’s agenda to reduce single-use plastics and plastic pollution more broadly, and to shift from a linear model of resource consumption to a more circular economy of reuse and recovery.

“In a circular economy, the use of raw materials is minimised because products are designed, from the very start, to be reused, repaired and/or recycled,” explained Mr Peake. “It’s about maximising resources and minimising waste, all of which contributes to growing the economy, increasing jobs and reducing impacts on the environment.”

The Victorian Government has engaged the National Retailers Association (NRA) to work with Victorian businesses in preparing for the bag ban. The NRA has set up a toll-free **Bag Ban Hotline (1800 817 723)** to provide business with support in transitioning away from single-use lightweight plastic bags.

It is important for retailers to run-down existing stocks of noncompliant bags and consider what is the best option for each business and their customers. Being prepared will help with a smooth the transition for businesses and consumers. Detailed information about the ban can be found at [vicbagban.com.au](http://vicbagban.com.au) and [plasticbags.gov.au](http://plasticbags.gov.au).

- ENDS -

#MaximiseResourcesMinimiseWaste

### Additional information

- Sustainability Victoria is running 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 the campaign visit [sustainability.vic.gov.au/Campaigns/Better-Bag-Habits](https://sustainability.vic.gov.au/Campaigns/Better-Bag-Habits).
- The Victorian Government is currently developing a circular economy policy and action plan for Victoria by late 2019. In a circular economy, people minimise waste and make the most of resources. Shifting to a more circular economy will grow the economy, increase jobs and reduce impacts on the environment. It will also reduce the impact of plastic pollution on our environment. You can find out more at [environment.vic.gov.au/sustainability/circulareconomy](https://environment.vic.gov.au/sustainability/circulareconomy)

### For further information or comment, please contact:

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*You will have known us for some time as the Gippsland Waste and Resource Recovery Group (GWRRG), but we are starting the new financial year with fresh new look – **Resource Recovery Gippsland**.*

*Still one of Victoria's seven Waste and Resource Recovery Groups, Resource Recovery Gippsland is committed to supporting our region's journey in maximising resources and minimising waste.*