

March 2017

Keep Australia Beautiful Council Northern Territory application to Coles and Woolworths

(Reinvestment of Revenue obtained from Plastic Bag Ban Act
Northern Territory)

Keep Australia Beautiful Council Northern Territory (KABCNT) is a non-government, not-for-profit community based organisation that has been incorporated as an association in the Northern Territory since 1976. KABC(NT) is Northern Territory's peak body in litter control. We have always maintained a dominant anti-litter leadership role in the Territory with membership consisting of the general community, Councils and businesses.

On 1st September 2011, Northern Territory Government banned the supply of lightweight, single use, non-biodegradable plastic bags under the Territory Government 'Greening the Territory' initiative. Northern Territory retailers chose to sell their customers reusable green bags (*non-biodegradable heavy polypropylene*) and thick heavy glossy bags (*non-biodegradable heavy polypropylene bags thicker than 35 microns*) as additional revenue making product line items and at an unparalleled new additional cost and expense to shopping customers in the Northern Territory. Disappointingly this step was as an additional expense to Territorian cost of living and to the detriment of our environment.

KABC(NT) commissions biannual (every 6 months) litter count surveys across 74 various site types in the Northern Territory to monitor 'litter and littering' trends. The survey conducted by McGregor Tan Research Pty. Ltd. also includes different material types and has been carried out over many years.

Since the ban of plastic bags in 2011, litter count data across the Northern Territory illustrates plastic bag litter and littering has increased for five consecutive years. The littering of light weight bags has increased by 100% and thick glossy bags have increased by 600%. This indicates that the Act has not met its intent or resulted in the desired change of retail customer attitude and behavior.

The retailers' thick glossy heavy bags do not truly degrade. When littered they breakdown into many tiny pieces and inevitably end up in places like the ocean where they are mistaken for food and consumed by wildlife. Plastic bag fragments absorb pollutants which are known hormone disrupting chemicals and when consumed can make their way through the food chain and into humans. Negative impacts from increased plastic bag littering include wildlife loss, economic loss, depletion of resources and loss in quality of life.



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The continual increase in plastic bag litter across the Northern Territory is disappointing but logical to a degree given that there is no 're-use' or 'alternative use' education campaign in place.

Calculating at two bags purchase per person, per week annually equates to nearly \$4,000,000.00 expenditure by Territory retail customers. This created new additional revenue for NT retailers under this Act. This does not include additional revenue from increased bin liners sales.

KABC(NT) 'Plastic Bag Project Officer' proposal seeks a 2% reinvestment of the annual revenue gained to help meet the intent of the Act and fund delivery of various agreed strategies in partnership with Councils (Local Government) and KABC(NT).

Three Councils in the Northern Territory's Top End (City of Darwin, City of Palmerston and Litchfield Council) are all very supportive of the KABC(NT) proposal and have verbally agreed to contribute shared funding towards our proposal. This is in an effort to reduce plastic bag litter, abandoned trolley litter, shopping center litter, car park litter and to reduce the loss of valuable recyclable resources into landfill via residential kerbside system.

KABC(NT) 'Plastic Bag Project Officer' proposal offers Woolworths and Coles the opportunity to demonstrate corporate social responsibility to the community, environment, and Territorians. This is an opportunity to reduce negative impact on the environment and actively work towards a sustainable future. Reinvesting Northern Territory retail revenue from the 'Plastic Bag Ban' Act would demonstrate regard for United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and consideration for Northern Territory's customers and the environment.

KABC(NT) would like to positively influence both Coles and Woolworths' national corporate office to optimistically respond to the continuing increased plastic bag littering situation within the Northern Territory. We would like you to support the KABC(NT) 'Plastic Bag Officer' proposal with shared objectives helping reduce plastic bag litter and meet the intent of the Act.

Kind Regards,

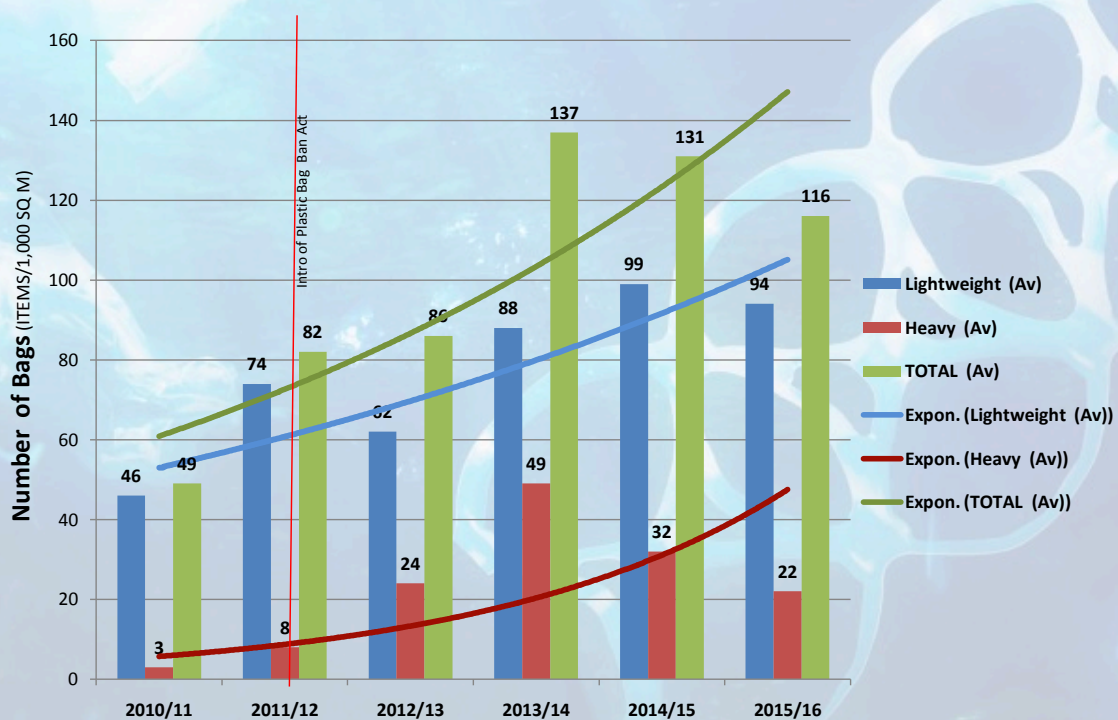
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NORTHERN TERRITORY PLASTIC BAG LITTER TREND (2010 - 2016)



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