



TRAINING KIT

HANDLING CUSTOMER QUESTIONS

Single-use plastic bags have been provided free-of-charge for many years so customers will need to change long-held expectations and habits which may result in questions and objections at the point-of-sale.

Some questions will be simple and straightforward – what is the ban, why is it happening, and what should I use instead? However some customers may react aggressively or have unusual questions which you will need to politely handle to avoid negative impacts on your business.

The following outlines sample customer questions and suggested responses as a starting point, though your business should consider how you will handle customer queries in your own unique way.

Customer query	Suggested responses
Why can't I get a free plastic bag anymore?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Queensland Government has banned the supply of all lightweight plastic bags and applies to all retailers in Queensland.• The ban is designed to help protect the environment and wildlife by reducing the litter and damage caused by single-use plastic bags.• We now offer alternative bags but these do incur higher costs so we need to charge a small fee for them. These bags are reusable so they represent good value.• Alternatively please feel free to bring your own reusable bags, there is no cost to use your own bags.
Which bags are banned and which are allowed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Queensland Government has banned the supply of all lightweight, singlet-style plastic bags under 35 microns in thickness which are those typically found in supermarkets. These bags are considered 'single-use' meaning they end up in landfill or are littered after one use. They last up to 1000 years and break down into micropieces which are harmful to the environment and wildlife.• Biodegradable bags are also banned because the Queensland Government's research indicated little difference in the impact on the environment particularly when the bags are consumed by wildlife.• Plastic bags that are not banned are: barrier bags without handles (those used to contain fruit, vegetables and deli items), bin-liners, nappy bags, and thicker plastic bags (like those used by department stores).• Reusable bags such as 'green bags', hessian or fabric bags, and boutique-style cardboard bags.• Paper bags often used by food outlets and pharmacies are not banned and should be recycled after use.
When does the ban come into effect?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ban comes into effect on 1 July 2018.• If your business has implemented changes before this date, you may want to explain that your business is being proactive in preparing for the ban so the transition is smoother and easier for customers when it becomes law.
What difference will this ban really make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Queensland Government has implemented the ban on lightweight plastic bags to reduce the substantial impact they have on the environment and wildlife.• Queenslanders use approximately 900 million lightweight plastic bags every year and recycle less than 4% of these.



RETAILER TRANSITION PROGRAM

MANAGE THE BAN

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other countries across the world and other states in Australia have implemented similar bans and witnessed a dramatic reduction in plastic bag litter and improved environmental outcomes.
I didn't bring enough reusable bags, what do I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a range of reusable bags available to purchase for a small fee. We have recycled stock boxes available for you to pack and carry your goods. If your business has decided not to offer any bags at all, you will need to politely inform customers that you do not have any bags to offer them. If there is a chance that this will be problematic, you may want to consider keeping a small supply of compliant bags on hand for emergencies.
Why do I have to pay for alternative bags?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reusable bags are higher quality and therefore higher cost so we do need to charge a small amount for them.
Why does my alternative bag need to be in good condition?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a customer presents a bag which is excessively dirty or damaged, team members should politely and discreetly inform them that the bag is too dirty or damaged to use and offer alternatives. Should the customer question the decision, they should be informed that the bag may pose health risks to the products inside (such as food and veges), to the health of our team members, or could ultimately put the customer at risk should the bag break. Most reusable bags like green bags or fabric bags are washable.
Why do I have to pack my own bag?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your business has decided to ask customers to pack their own bags, team members will need to explain that they are unable to pack customer bags. Some retailers use the checkout and packing space to signal this to customers. For example, Aldi team members rarely mention that you need to pack your own bag but instead the small checkout, lack of bag packing racks and the additional packing bench signal this message to customers. If a customer asks a team member to overfill a bag, they should be trained to politely refuse due to workplace health and safety policies. You may advise team members to fill bags to a comfortable level and then allow customers to continue filling the bag at their own discretion. Team members should never lift overfilled bags.
What should I use as a bin liner now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many people have been using lightweight plastic bags as bin liners or garbage bags for many years and may be confronted by these bags no longer being available. If consumers are using a plastic or metal bin they could reduce their environmental impact by not using a bin liner and just washing out the bin after emptying. Some people may like to wrap certain waste in newspaper or recycle packaging such as bread bags. Most supermarkets will continue to offer purpose-made bin liner bags for sale.
What should I use to pick up after my pet now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some dog-friendly parks and reserves, plastic bags are available to scoop animal waste. These bags are not affected by the ban. You can also purchase these from most pet stores and some supermarkets. Otherwise, you could use newspaper or re-use a barrier bag or bread bag.
Can I recycle reusable bags?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can recycle most plastic, fabric, cardboard or paper bags. For plastic bags, many supermarkets or shopping centres now offer soft plastic recycling facilities. Find your local waste or recycling centre via the Department of Environment & Heritage Protection at www.ehp.qld.gov.au/waste/.

Need more info? Go to www.qldbaggan.com.au