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New Coles “Reusable Bags” are not Genuinely Reusable

According to the Boomerang Alliance, Coles Supermarkets in their recent announcement about using marine plastic waste in plastic bags are undermining their own Together to Zero Waste strategy by failing to meet genuine standards for reusability.

‘Coles have missed a golden opportunity to reduce the use of wasteful plastic bags by continuing to sell disposable shopping bags. We know these thicker bags (55mcn) are at best only used a few times – the vast majority are littered or dumped into landfill,’ said Toby Hutcheon, Campaign Manager.

‘The commitment to an 80% recycled content including 20% from collected marine plastic waste is a welcomed initiative but providing slightly thicker plastic bags does not make them reusable.’

‘A reusable shopping bag should be reusable for its primary purpose - carrying shopping. The international rule of thumb is that a bag should be designed to achieve a minimum 125 return shopping trips and weight carried, over a certain distance, to be called reusable.’

‘Coles could take a genuine step forward in reducing plastic waste and litter by introducing shopping bags that pass that test and phasing out the wasteful bags.’

The Boomerang Alliance have proposed development of a national shopping bag standard; and that there should be no free bags made from any material.

‘We urge States such as Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia, who have announced their intentions to phase out thick plastic bags, to quickly develop this standard. It is the surest way to get rid of problematic single use and disposable plastic bags and eliminate plastic litter and waste.’