

For immediate release.

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Woolworths should supply reusable bags, not paper bags.

Boomerang Alliance welcomes the announcement by Woolworths on the phase out of their 15 cents plastic shopping bags in Queensland. The move comes ahead of a proposed ban on these bags scheduled for September (in Queensland). Bans are already in place in Western Australia and expected in South Australia and the ACT soon.

'Whilst we welcome this announcement, we are concerned that Woolworths and others likely to follow, are simply switching customers to another disposable option, paper bags.' said Toby Hutcheon, Campaign Manager of Boomerang Alliance

'Reusable bags, not paper bags, are the answer to plastic bag waste and litter.'

Woolworths say that 80% of their customers are already using 'reusable bags' and they encourage other customers to do the same. But what will happen when these bags need to be replaced?

The Boomerang Alliance is proposing a new national standard for reusable bags, as bags currently provided by retailers are not genuinely reusable. They do not meet a reusable standard.

This new standard, and based upon an overseas standard, requires any reusable bag to be manufactured and tested to be able to achieve at least 125 shopping cycles, be a minimum thickness, ideally with stitched handles, use recycled materials and able to be collected for recycling at end of life.

'The Boomerang Alliance is seeking the support of all governments in endorsing this as a national standard and urging all retailers to only sell reusable shopping bags that meet this genuine reusable bag standard.'

The Queensland government needs to adopt this standard in regulations as a matter of urgency.