



MEDIA RELEASE  
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## **Australia's four major supermarkets fail audit into plastic use, worrying signs in online groceries**

- **Hundreds of volunteer mystery shoppers find plastic-free penalty, with loose fresh produce more expensive than the same item wrapped in plastic in 73% of cases**
- **Inconsistent and limited options when buying groceries online could increase unnecessary plastic on Australian shopping lists**
- **About 140,000 tonnes of plastic enters the Australian environment every year, with packaging making up 58% of litter collected**

Australia's big supermarkets are adding fuel to the plastic pollution crisis, with all four failing an independent audit into their plastic use, says the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) and the Boomerang Alliance (BA). Supermarkets are a \$144.3 billion industry in Australia.

Woolworths received scores of 38%, Metcash (IGA, Foodland, Friendly Grocer and Eziway) 26%, Coles 19%, and ALDI 14%. Scores consider five areas: transparency, plastic reduction, reuse, recycling, and policy, planning and governance. Whilst Woolworths and Metcash have made noteworthy improvements since their 2023 scores of 10% and 3% respectively, Coles has lost ground each year and ALDI comes in last after taking top spot in 2023.

The third edition of the annual audit report, [Unwrapped](#), is being launched this morning at a press conference outside the Coles Group AGM.

**AMCS Program Manager Tara Jones said:** "Australia's biggest supermarkets are sweeping the plastic pollution crisis under the shelf while packaging piles up in our ocean and on our beaches.

"We placed online orders with Coles and Woolworths across multiple stores and states and, despite choosing loose produce, groceries still often arrived overwrapped in plastic. We even saw Coles pack single bulbs of garlic in their own plastic produce bag.

"As more and more Australians turn to online orders, these are worrying signs that even more single-use plastic could creep into our grocery shops unless supermarkets take firm steps now.

“Hundreds of volunteer shoppers helped collect data for this year’s audit. For the third year in a row, the data they collected shows it usually costs more to buy loose fresh produce than the same item wrapped in plastic.

“Plastic-free loose fresh produce was more expensive in 73% of cases. Disappointingly, this remains consistent with what our volunteer investigators found in 2024. Oranges, for example, averaged \$4.24 per kilogram loose, compared to \$2.49 per kilogram pre-packaged.

“It’s already hard enough for Australians who are trying to do the right thing by keeping unnecessary plastic off the shopping list. A plastic-free penalty on fruit and vegetables punishes people who are trying to make sustainable choices and online customers should be able to trust that selecting ‘loose produce’ actually means plastic-free.

“People just want to buy their groceries without a bin full of plastic at the end of the week.

“To protect wildlife and ourselves from plastic pollution, large-scale plastic users like the big supermarkets must cut unnecessary plastic packaging, provide customers with more choice to avoid disposable plastic in store and online, and publicly share the amount of plastic packaging placed on shelves and used throughout supply chains so they can be held accountable for their plastic use.”

**Boomerang Alliance Director, Jeff Angel, said:** “Research shows us that the more plastic that gets produced, the more plastic ends up polluting our environment. Packaging now makes up 58% of litter collected by Clean Up Australia volunteers, much of which comes from the supermarket shelf.

“The plastic pollution crisis is polluting our oceans and waterways, killing marine life, and even impacting human health. About 140,000 tonnes of plastic already enters the Australian environment every year. Without global action, plastic production is projected to triple by 2060 which would send plastic pollution spiralling out of control.

“It’s clear that urgent action is needed by the big supermarkets, and by the government. We’re calling on the federal and state governments to step up and implement promised packaging laws. We urgently need mandatory reuse targets with an extended producer responsibility scheme that makes supermarkets and brands financially responsible for the waste they create.”

**A press conference will be held at 7:30AM AEDT, 11 November, at CENTREPIECE in Melbourne Park, Melbourne VIC 3000.**

**Further information or comment contact AMCS Program Manager Tara Jones on 0402 188 326 or Boomerang Alliance spokesperson Jeff Angel on 0418 273 773.**

**[Images and vision of supermarket plastic and plastic pollution are available via Hightail.](#) A recording of the press conference will be added by 1PM AEDT, 11 November.**

**About the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS):**

The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) is Australia’s leading voice for ocean conservation. As an independent charity, we have been protecting our precious marine life

and habitats since 1965.

We are a passionate community of scientists, educators, and advocates dedicated to safeguarding Australia's oceans. Our work has helped establish vital marine reserves, protect endangered species like the Australian sea lion, stop super trawlers and lead efforts to ban whaling.

From the Great Barrier Reef to Ningaloo, together with our community of ocean lovers, AMCS fights for healthy oceans and marine wildlife every day.

**About the Boomerang Alliance:**

Established in 2003 the Alliance has grown to 56 groups and led key campaigns for the introduction of container refund schemes across Australia and the banning of single use plastics. Its Plastic Free Places program has several thousand food service outlets enrolled showing the way to reduce plastic footprints.

Boomerang is currently pursuing the mainstreaming of reusables (eg, drink cups) across the venue and events sectors and reform of packaging laws to implement reduction, reuse and recycled content.