



Coast shoppers express feelings over plastic

Leah Fineran | January 30th, 2010

EXPRESS shoppers will no longer be offered plastic bags at Woolworths supermarkets on the Gold Coast.

From this week express checkout shoppers at [Woolworths](#) will have to ask for a plastic bag or fork out \$1 for a reusable bag to carry their 15-or-less items.

Woolworths spokesman Benedict Brook said the policy was intended to slow plastic bag consumption at all Gold Coast supermarkets.

Woolworths has a policy of not offering customers plastic bags for three items or less.

"If, however, a customer purchases more than three items or simply asks for one, then staff will be happy to supply a free plastic bag," he said.

Some stores have placed signs warning customers that express checkouts are 'plastic free zones'.

A checkout operator who declined to be named said the policy had caused confusion and even anger this week as customers adjusted to the changes.

She said the majority of customers were upset and some had reacted angrily to not being offered bags as a matter of course.

"They seem to be very annoyed because they use the plastic bags for rubbish bags," she said.

Other shoppers have welcomed the policy.

Southport mum Annabel Boxall said removing the automatic option of plastic bags would remind her to use her reusable bags.

"I've got heaps of those green bags which I leave in my car and I always carry a reusable bag in my handbag but sometimes I forget to use it and just accept a plastic bag," she said.

"I think this is a good idea because hopefully it will jog my memory to use the bags I already have."

[Planet Ark](#) commended the move as a small step toward long-term behavioural change.

But campaigns manager Brad Gray said stronger steps including a statewide ban were the only acceptable long-term solutions.

South Australia enacted a ban in 2009, Victoria trialled a levy in 2008 and the Northern Territory and Western Australia are considering a ban this year.

Mr Gray said Australians used 6.9 billion plastic bags a year.

German supermarket chain [Aldi](#) is the only supermarket chain in Australia that supports a complete ban on free single-use plastic bags and has not stocked them since their 2001 opening.

CHECK IT OUT: NO PLASTIC



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