






Reducing the impacts of plastics on the Victorian environment

Types of shopping bags

There are many shopping bag options available to customers and each has different benefits and costs to customers and retailers.

Type of bag	Description	
Lightweight plastic shopping bag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thin (less than 35 microns) plastic bag with handles. • High strength, waterproof and reliable for transporting shopping. • Designed for single-use, but commonly reused as bin liners. • Widely available in supermarkets and stores for free • Often made of high density polyethylene (HDPE). • Can be recycled through supermarket collection points. 	
Thick plastic shopping bag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A heavier-weight plastic bag commonly available at many department and boutique stores. • High strength, waterproof and reliable for transporting shopping. • More durable than lightweight plastic bags. • Often made of low density polyethylene (LDPE). 	
Paper bag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed for single-use and are less durable than plastic bags. • Degradable and therefore have less impact in the litter stream than plastic bags • Higher global warming potential than plastic bags if disposed to landfill. • Can be recycled through kerbside collection • Compostable if shredded 	
Green bag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made from thick plastic and can be reused many times • Commonly sold by supermarkets as an alternative to lightweight plastic shopping bags. • Strong and durable, and can hold more than a lightweight plastic shopping bag. 	
Cotton bag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made from woven cotton. • Can be reused many times. • Strong, durable, flexible and can hold more than a lightweight plastic shopping bag. 	

Images: Sustainability Victoria & Hyder Consulting (2016). Comparison of existing life cycle analysis of shopping bag alternatives. Retrieved from [http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/upload/resources/publications/plastic-bag-phase-out/LCA_shopping_bags_full_report\[2\]_2.pdf](http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/upload/resources/publications/plastic-bag-phase-out/LCA_shopping_bags_full_report[2]_2.pdf)