

Dear Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio

Plastic bags are harming our oceans. Please follow South Australia, Tasmania, ACT and the Northern Territory in banning plastic bag in Victoria.

Plastic bags have some unique problems. While their environmental costs are burdensome for communities and the planet, the cost of plastic bags for retailers is pretty low. Made from ethylene, a byproduct of petroleum or natural gas, plastic bags are so cheap and flimsy that cashiers use them freely, double bagging as a matter of course and often sticking just a few items in each bag. As a result, shoppers end up with piles of plastic bags spilling out of closets and threatening to take over cupboards . . . until we finally throw up our hands and either dump them in the trash or, if we're lucky enough to live in an area where stores provide plastic bag collection bins, cart them back for recycling. Sure, some of us reuse plastic shopping bags to line our waste bins or to pick up dog poop, but the bags still end up in the landfill.

Even when disposed of properly, plastic bags are so lightweight and aerodynamic, they are easily picked up and carried by the wind. They can escape from trash bins, recycle bins, garbage trucks, and landfills, and end up littering the landscape. Blowing down the street, flapping from trees, clogging storm drains (costing municipalities millions of dollars in cleanup costs), and making their way out to sea, plastic bags have been referred to as "urban tumbleweeds" for good reason. And they persist in the environment, causing harm for a very long time.

From Thomas [REDACTED]