

# Woolworths ramps up sustainable shopping bag initiatives

Over the last month, Woolworths has commenced with the rollout of two in-store initiatives to more than 200 stores to assist customers with the disposal of excess or worn reusable shopping bags.



Source: Supplied

“The objective of our reusable shopping bag initiative is to change consumption behaviour and to reduce our reliance on single-use plastic. All our food markets are single-use plastic shopping bag free, which has resulted in a substantial increase in the demand and use of reusable shopping bags.

“We are committed to circularity and reducing single-use consumption, so we challenged ourselves to ensure that the broken or worn reusable bags are disposed of responsibly and given a new life and for excess bags to be reused, reducing the need to purchase more,” says Latiefa Behardien, Woolworths Foods chief technology and sustainability officer.

“Last year, as part of our vision for zero packaging waste to landfill, we started engaging with local recyclers to test various second-life products for our reusable bags and started trialling recycling ‘drop offs’ at our tills in selected stores.

“The objective of the trial was to test our reverse logistics system, as the bags need to be returned with our other recyclable store waste back to our Distribution Centres where it is then sorted before moving onto recyclers for second life trials,” confirms Behardien.

With the rollout of the reusable bag recycling drops off to an additional 100 stores, Woolworths and the recyclers are hoping to have the opportunity to test various second-life options on a bigger scale to finalise the best option for the worn reusable bags and close the circle.

## Bring a Bag/Take a Bag

Woolworths said the second ‘Bring a bag/Take a Bag’ initiative which the retailer recently trialled in four stores in Cape Town has been well received by customers, as it offers them the opportunity to drop off their excess reusable bags that are still in good condition for other customers who have forgotten theirs to use and return thereafter.



### Major brands failing to meet plastic sustainability goals

3 Nov 2022



“Based on our customer feedback and a great suggestion from ‘*Good Things Guy*’ Brent Lindeque, we trialled a ‘bag share’ initiative – Bring a Bag/Take a Bag in four stores and we are delighted to be rolling it out to an additional 100 stores across the country.

“An additional win-win is that the in-store equipment to house the bags has been made locally by a Black-owned shopfitting

company that we have been working with for over 10 years and the in-store structures are made from 100% recycled content, which used to be yoghurt tubs, tooth paste tubes or chip packets and would most likely end up in landfill,” adds Behardien.

“While recycling alone cannot solve the world’s pollution problems, it has significant potential to impact cleaning up our waste systems, creating jobs and reducing the use of virgin plastics. Every step of the way helps to bring about a cleaner, safer country for all,” concludes Behardien.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>