

Woolworths to open more 'plastic bag free' stores

Woolworths is planning to introduce three more 'plastic shopping bag free' stores in the country, after trialling the concept at the Steenberg branch in Cape Town. The additional plastic bag free stores will be in Maroun Square in Johannesburg, Moreleta Village in Pretoria and Delcairn Centre in Durban.



The retailer also confirmed that it will be rolling out its new low-cost, reusable bag to more stores across the country after a successful six month trial in four of its Western Cape stores. During the trial, which was launched in November 2018, more than 100,000 single-use bags were saved from going out into the environment as customers opted for affordable, reusable shopping bags.

From May, the more affordable reusable shopping bags will be rolled out to 15 additional top Woolies stores across the country.

The project, which aims to positively shift consumer behaviour to choosing reusable bags, is an important part of Woolworths' commitments to achieve its zero packaging waste to landfill vision and to specifically phase out single-use plastic bags by 2020.

"This journey to phase out single-use plastics is one that we have to take together, and it has been fantastic to see Woolies customers coming on board to help reduce plastic waste in the environment. At the stores where customers had the option to keep buying single-use plastic bags, we saw promising reductions in plastic bag sales, particularly at Woolies Pinelands where there was a 23% drop in the sales of single-use plastic bags. We look forward now to expanding the project for greater impact," says Feroz Koor, the Woolworths Holdings Group head of sustainability.



Woolworths announces 'plastic bag free' store

9 Oct 2018



129,000 bottles removed from local waste streams

Apart from the obvious benefit of helping customers change to reusable bags, the project has other important spin-offs. The reusable shopping bag's fabric is made locally out of recycled plastic bottles and is recyclable. To date, the production of the low-cost reusable bag has resulted in over 129,000 plastic bottles being removed from South African waste streams to be recycled and made into the bag's fabric. This figure will increase significantly with the rollout to 15 more stores.

The project also supports South African black-owned supplier, Isikhwama, which has been supplying Woolworths with reusable bags for over ten years. Isikhwama currently employs 130 people and 17 new jobs were created during the first phase of the trial. The ongoing roll-out of the low-cost reusable bag will enable Isikhwama to grow their business and employ more people.



#BizTrends2019: Single-use plastic, circular economy, ethical supply chains and climate action to drive retail in 2019

Feroz Koor 25 Jan 2019



New Plastics Economy Global Commitment

The expansion of the reusable bag pilot comes at a time when Woolworths Holdings has become the first and only African company to sign The Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy Global Commitment. The initiative intends to define a 'new normal' for plastics globally, involves all sectors of society across the world in addressing plastic waste and pollution at its source.

In collaboration with the UN Environment, the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment was launched in October 2018. It has since been signed by more than 250 organisations representing 20% of all plastic packaging produced globally.

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