



MEDIA RELEASE

March 2016

BAN PLASTIC BAGS! BUT WHAT ABOUT COMPOSTABLE BAGS?

The Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA) welcomes the recent debate and discussions over more States banning single use plastic bags as well as the recent Government Meeting to investigate a national ban on plastic bags. What about the discussion on certified compostable bags?

Certified compostable bags are biodegradable and the best solution for the source separation of food and garden organics. Notwithstanding biodegradable is not always compostable.

It is critical that compostable plastics carry the Australian Standards certification to define the product will biodegrade in a commercial composting operation. AORA's stated national policy is to ban all single use non compostable plastic bags of all gauges (see full policy below).

With the implementation of a ban, Organic Recyclers and composters acknowledge the need to continue to provide the community with a convenient means of containing kitchen waste etc. Certified compostable bags meet this need and must be exempt from any ban on single use plastic bags (Polyethylene/conventional plastics).

"It's great to see Tasmania started this trend and then other jurisdictions like South Australia, Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory have followed. Now it's time for other States to follow the smaller jurisdictions and ban single use plastic bags whilst ensuring that certified compostable bags are exempt from the ban." Said Paul Coffey, Chairman of AORA.

"It's important that everyone understands the differences between products claimed as degradable, oxo-degradable, biodegradable and certified compostable. They simply aren't the same thing and unless they are Australian Standards certified compostable then they are not considered suitable for use in organics recycling." Said Peter McLean, Executive Officer at AORA.

Governments around Australia should be commended on their commitment to address the impact of plastic bags on our environment. AORA will continue to work with all governments across Australia to help formulate policies that deliver the best outcomes for the environment, community and government.

END

For media comment, AORA Executive Officer, Peter McLean on 0416 227 158

Note to Editor:

The Australian Organics Recycling Association's full policy on plastic bags is as follows:

"AORA supports the ban on all single use non compostable plastics, including plastic bags of all gauges, agricultural films and packaging which cannot be reused, recovered or recycled in any way. The use of compostable bags and plastics which meet the requirements of AS4736 and AS5810 as verified by the Australasian Bioplastics Association allows for more effective source separation and organic resource processing."

The applicable Australian Standards for compostable bags are AS4736-2006 and AS5810-2010.

The Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA) was established in 2012 and works on behalf of its members including processors, associate industries, educators and all levels of Government to raise awareness of the benefits of recycling organic resources. It aims to act as an advocate for the wider organics resource recovery and beneficial reuse industries and to represent their views in a constructive dialogue with policy makers. AORA envisages an industry in which best practice is shared, standards are maintained and surpassed, and which makes a positive contribution to safeguarding the environment. To become a member or to learn more, please visit www.aora.org.au To learn more about the benefits of organics recycling, please visit www.compostforsoils.com.au