

Media Release

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Out of the box: Coles unveils cardboard box trial to help reduce single-use plastic bags

Images available [here](#)

In a move to reduce plastic waste and the use of single-use plastic bags in its fresh produce department, Coles has launched a new trial that will give customers the option to use a cardboard box when buying loose fruit and vegetables.

Customers will be given the opportunity to reuse one of the cardboard boxes used to deliver fresh fruit and vegetables to Coles stores - giving the box a second life and helping shoppers to reduce the need to use plastic bags in the fresh produce department.

The plastic-free alternative is free of charge and is available to collect loose fresh produce items in select stores. Customers can then use the boxes to carry items home where they can be recycled, or they can leave the box at the checkout for another customer.

The eight-week trial will take place in five stores, including Prahan and Waverly Gardens in Melbourne, Noosa Heads in Queensland, Ocean Shores in New South Wales and the Perth suburb of Hilton.

Coles Chief Operations and Sustainability Officer Matt Swindells says not only does the initiative help reduce the use of single-use plastic produce bags, the cardboard boxes provide a free solution for those who forget their reusable shopping bags.

"We know our customers want us to provide more sustainable packaging solutions, and this trial offers a plastic-free alternative to fresh produce bags that, if successful, could see a sizeable reduction in the number of plastic produce bags in circulation," said Matt.

"The great thing about these boxes is that they fit easily in your trolley, and can be taken home and recycled, or left at store for someone else to use again. It also brings a local grocer feel to your shop while helping to create a more sustainable future," he said.

According to a Coles survey, 8 in 10 shoppers feel it is important for produce packaging to be recyclable¹, while 61% of interviewed customers feel positively about the cardboard box solution².

¹ Source: IMI, Produce Packaging Sustainability Study, April 2024 n=1,003

² Source: First Point Research & Consulting, Customer Intercepts: Packaging Initiative Trials, July 2024, n=82

Coles partner Planet Ark Chief Executive Officer Rebecca Gilling said the initiative was an excellent way to encourage customers to purchase loose fruit and vegetables and reduce the use of plastic fresh produce bags

“Coles is providing its customers with a way to reduce their use of plastic. Not only is this encouraging more customers to buy loose, but it’s also helping to advance the circular economy by giving those used cardboard boxes a second life and helping to reduce our need for single-use plastic bags,” said Rebecca.

The boxes, previously used to transport fresh fruit and vegetables, are available in the fresh produce department and at the checkouts of participating stores.

In addition to the box trial, in 2023 Coles stopped selling soft plastic shopping bags in-store and online which removed 230 million plastic bags from circulation in one year. 100% recycled paper bags that can be recycled kerbside are now available for purchase, as well as a range of reusable tote, chiller and mesh produce bags.



Coles team member Jessica with Coles Prahran team member Dimple

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