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Call for ban on plastic bags

NICOLA KALMAR

TWO Broome residents are throwing down the gauntlet to the local community and business operators to create an "environmentally-friendly" product for shoppers in a bid to rid the town of non-biodegradable plastic shopping bags.

Long term Broome residents Nik Wevers and Pat Lowe said it was time for Broome to "say no" to plastic bags commonly found in supermarkets and focus on using a green alternative to support the environment.

More and more of Broome's wildlife and pristine surroundings continue to be blighted by discarded plastic shopping bags, the residents said.

Last month, the State Government rejected a Labor Bill proposing to outlaw single-use, non-biodegradable plastic bags found in supermarkets.

Shadow environment minister Sally Talbot said there was strong public support for a ban on the plastic bags and it was disappointing Liberal and Nationals MPs had not supported her Private Members' Bill.

Ms Wevers, a strong supporter of a plastic bag ban, said she had been pursuing the issue for more than a decade and was anxious to see action taken.

"Plastic bags have great ram-



South Australian visitor Denise Olds said there should be a national ban on plastic bags.
Picture: Nicola Kalmar

ifications on the environment," she said.

"Chemicals in the environment come from the production, distribution and use of these plastic bags, which are then being discarded after use."

Ms Lowe said she had seen the impacts of discarded plastic bags on local wildlife.

the community needed to voice their support on a local level.

They are in favour of supermarkets charging a small fee per plastic bag in the interim to reduce the numbers of plastic bags distributed.

Ms Wevers said the fees could go towards funding a community-driven project to create an environmentally-friendly, "Broome-style" bag.

"We could design our own bag with a logo saying something like 'Broome, bag free and beautiful'."

Ms Wevers said the project could benefit from input at all levels, from business support to local schools running a competition to create a design for the product.

Meanwhile, the *Broome Advertiser* took to the streets of Broome last week to ask the public their thoughts on a complete ban.

The majority said they were in favour of a complete ban, while others supported the idea of using "green" bags.

A local woman, who did not wish to be named, said Broome could adopt a similar approach to stores in Exmouth and use cardboard boxes as an alternative to plastic bags, while Broome visitor Denise Olds, from South Australia, said she was in favour of a national ban on plastic bags.

street talk

Do you support a ban on plastic shopping bags?



I would support a ban. Plastic bags are like coat hangers, they breed in your house! I think there needs to be a big drive by supermarkets to buy green bags. I think a charge on bags is a good incentive for people.

Julia McIntyre, Broome



No, I wouldn't support a ban. I've considered using environmentally-friendly bags but the (current) bags are convenient. I don't think supermarkets should charge customers a fee. I wouldn't be happy about it if they did, but I would pay if I had to.

Kristie Malloy, Broome



Yes, I support a ban. The current bags don't work anyway, they're not that strong. I think a ban is a good idea. I don't use them when I go shopping. I



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