



## MINISTRY OF ECONOMY

### Information for Manufacturers, Sellers, Suppliers and Distributors of Plastic Bags

Starting from 1 January 2020, the **manufacture, sale, supply as well as the distribution** of plastic bags will be banned. The Environment Management (Budget Amendment) Act 2019 defines plastic bags as a carry bag that is made entirely or in part of polyethylene also referred to as 'PET' and is less than 50 microns in thickness and is used to carry or transport goods.

#### 1. Why has the plastic bag ban been introduced?

Single-use plastic bags are one of the most damaging scourges on Fiji's natural environment. They clog our roadways, our beaches and our reefs, killing wildlife and sully the beauty of our country. Single-use plastics do not biodegrade, they remain a stain on our environment for generations and even when incinerated they emit harmful gases.

By banning single-use plastics, we're safeguarding our environment, our oceans and the health and wellbeing of the Fijian people. As Fijian importers and manufacturers you have a key role to play in creating a plastic free Fiji!

#### 2. When does the plastic bag ban come into effect?

1 January, 2020.

#### 3. Which plastic bags are banned?

The Environment Management (Budget Amendment) Act 2019 defines plastic bags as a carry bag that is made entirely or in part of polyethylene also referred to as 'PET' and is less than 50 microns in thickness and is used for the purpose of carrying or transporting of goods.

#### 4. Which plastic bags are allowed?

This ban does not apply to a carry bag that is:

- a) an integral part of packaging such as pre-packaged off the shelf items or plastic bags for carrying bread;
- b) used as garbage bags and bin liners; and
- c) bags above 50 microns in thickness.

## **5. What are the penalties for non-compliance with the plastic bag ban?**

A person who **manufactures** a plastic bag that is banned as per the legislation and is not exempted as per the list above, commits a crime and will be fined up to \$500,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 7 years or both.

A person who **sells, supplies or distributes or makes a plastic bag available to a customer** that is banned as per the legislation and is not exempted as per the list above for carrying good purchased, or to be purchased from a retailer, commits a crime and will be fined up to \$150,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or both.

## **6. What has the Fijian Government done to assist this transition?**

To support local manufacturers of plastic bag alternatives, duty on the importation of non-woven bags is increased from 15% to 32%. Import duty on raw materials for production of non-woven bags is decreased to zero percent to encourage the transition from plastic bags. Additionally, fiscal duty on paper/bamboo straws, paper containers, paper cups, paper plates, biodegradable kitchenware and tableware is reduced to zero percent. It's on businesses to take advantage of these incentives and seize this market opportunity in sustainable packaging.

## **7. Will there be an ECAL Levy on plastic bags?**

Any plastic bag that is 50 microns and above in thickness and has a handle, will incur an ECAL tax of 50 cents at the Point of Sale. Any business that does not have a POS and is charging an ECAL levy will be subject to penalties and fines by the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service.

**For more information contact the Ministry of Economy on +6798986312 or e-mail: [plasticbagban@economy.gov.fj](mailto:plasticbagban@economy.gov.fj)**