

PRESS RELEASE

The biggest leap in environmentally friendly book protection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As a centrepiece of the community, Libraries embrace important subjects including equality, indigenous traditions and sustainability. This sustainability shift has resulted in a number of changes to traditional library practises, including book end of life and single use plastics.

As a “single use” plastic, protective book coverings are in the firing line. These have been “banned” by some libraries who are looking to reduce their environmental impact. However, this decision may increase their environmental impact.

By removing plastic book coverings, the life of each book is greatly reduced. More books are sent to landfill, or if recycling, additional energy sources (often fossil fuels) are required to complete this process.

If biodegradable shopping bags, plastic cups and even drinking straws are freely available, why not book covering?

Our research identified a limited number of environmentally friendly book coverings. They cite organic or plant-based derivatives. At face value this reads well, to the contrary, these products only break down to microplastics.

Confused? Our research into these terms is summarised below.

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Organic / Plant Based

One product stated it is made with sugar cane. Sounds sustainable. However, there is no mention of what percentage of the product is made from sugarcane, or other ingredients used to manufacture. There is no mention of biodegradability, so at end of life, does it go to landfill never to completely break down?

Biodegradability

Another promoted itself as Biodegradable. This appears to be a feature to help reduce our environmental footprint.

Well, sort of. You see, the plastic covering may biodegrade, but not completely. Over many, many years, it will break down and leave toxic microplastics. These microplastics remain in our soils, waterways and even in animals. This is not an environmentally friendly solution.

Our search also uncovered what appears to be a new term for book covering, "Fully Biodegradable".

The website of Australian book covering manufacturer and supplier, Raeco, is promoting what they claim is a "World first Fully Biodegradable self adhesive book covering".

Trevor McCann, Director of Sales at Raeco explains "Our new book covering, known as Bioguard80® is the very first adhesive book covering that when placed in the right landfill or compostable environment will fully biodegrade without leaving toxic microplastics."

Further, McCann advised that Raeco had spent the last three years developing and testing a fully biodegradable book covering solution. He revealed that their secret "active biodegradable ingredient" makes all the difference.

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This active ingredient has been tested internationally against standards ISO 14855-1 for compost conditions ASTM D 5511:2018 for landfill conditions. These tests mean for full biodegradation to commence, Bioguard80® must be placed in either compost or landfill conditions. These environments contain the right mix of moisture, micro-organisms and temperatures that triggers biodegradation.

Bioguard 80® has also been tested to ISO 14855-1 for biodegradability. Once biodegradation is complete, no microplastics will remain. If a product is not tested against this certification, there is no way to know if it is fully biodegradable.

Fully Biodegradable means there are not toxic microplastics left. Worms eat it and produce nutrients to enrich soils.

Trevor added “This extensive testing means Bioguard80® will not biodegrade while on display or being used – even in high humidity environments. Bioguard80® is applied and protects books in the same manner as our popular Bookguard 80 covering. It has a delayed bond and is UV stabilised”.

During this year’s ALIA national conference in Canberra, (Australian Library and Information Association), some books on display were covered with Bioguard80®. By sight, these were difficult to distinguish from traditional coverings. They looked clear, however when touching the books, they did have a slight texture. Trevor explained “The active biodegradable ingredient can produce a slight texture in Bioguard80®. There is no loss of clarity or reduction in protection. This feature helps users feel the difference and know which books are covered with fully biodegradable book covering.

When discussing end of life, do libraries who recycle their old books still have to complete the arduous task of removing covers and placing these in one bin, while placing the pages in another?

“No” said Trevor.

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Bioguard80® is fully recyclable, as is the backing paper. “Backing paper can be placed in your recycling bin. The covering layer can also be recycled. It can also be composted or sent to landfill to fully biodegrade”.

At the end of life, the whole book can now be placed into your recycling bin or into compost or landfill for full biodegradation. The slight texture is a good indicator to know which books have the fully biodegradable covering.

Trevor concluded “Bioguard80® has been very well received – especially by Certified Green Councils or school looking to enhance their sustainable activities. Bioguard80® helps increase circulation by keeping books looking newer longer, extending their life while reducing your environmental footprint.”

Our environment is the only one we have. It makes good sense to protect and nurture it.

**** ENDS ****

IMAGES ATTACHED TO EMAIL – more available on request.

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