



Dear Minister,

Everyone knows we have a problem. Single-use plastic bags are a waste of resources and when littered are deadly to wildlife. Plastic doesn't go away, it only breaks up into smaller, more dangerous pieces.

In less than two weeks' time you will be meeting with the other Environment Ministers in Australia and this would be the perfect opportunity to start taking action.

Eleven years ago, in 2005 every Australian government agreed to phase out plastic bags but only four have. NSW, QLD and Victoria are yet to take action – in the meantime the pollution has continued.

On 11 November 2015 we wrote to all the Australian Environment Ministers:

“At the last meeting of environment ministers the issue of removing plastic bags from the litter stream and marine environment was discussed. Since that time the need for a ban and significantly reducing the landfilling of plastic has become even more urgent.

There is increasing evidence that even though a small percentage of bags are littered and then broken up into smaller and smaller pieces – they have a devastating impact on the environment. This includes so called ‘biodegradable’ bags, which are just as dangerous in the marine environment.”

This is still the case.

In February 2016 we wrote again with our joint Position Paper, including ten recommendations, which we submitted to the inter-governmental meeting at Taronga Zoo:

“A Commonwealth/State Government plastics agenda should be about reducing and then eliminating this threat and working internationally with other jurisdictions on complementary and effective global solutions.”

“In Australia an immediate policy response should be to introduce restrictions on single use plastic packaging and its avoidance, in favour of alternative reusable packaging and practices. Due to the long delays and policy review roadblocks in Commonwealth Government processes – state action is favoured.”

ACTION ON PLASTIC BAGS



Nine months ago, NSW, QLD and Victoria agreed to work together and deal with plastic bags. As existing bans show, the community can change their behaviour and endorse this popular measure. It's also very important that new bans cover so-called "biodegradable bags".

In April 2016 the Senate Inquiry into Marine Plastic Pollution added strength to our call, especially Recommendation 21:

8.91 The committee recommends that the Australian Government support states and territories in banning the use of single-use lightweight plastic bags. In doing so, the Australian Government should ensure that alternatives do not result in other pollutants entering the environment.

A harmonised phase-out of these harmful, unnecessary products will make an enormous difference to our marine wildlife, reduce waste of finite resources and bring us more in line with global movements to address the toxic tide of plastic in the marine environment.

It is time for ACTION on single-use plastic bags and adopt a positive environment protection measure. We urge you to not delay any longer.

Jeff Angel

Director



Groups listed here

Boomerang Alliance | Afrocab | Australian Conservation Foundation | Australian Marine Conservation Society | Arid Lands Environment Centre | Beach Patrol | Cairns And Far North Coast Environment Centre | Clean Up Australia Conservation Council Act Region | Conservation Council of South Australia | Conservation Council of Western Australia | Cooks River Alliance | Cooks River Valley Association | Environment Centre NT | Environment Tasmania | Environment Victoria | Friends of The Earth | Greenpeace Australia Pacific | Lead Group | Living Ocean | Mineral Policy Institute | Nature Conservation Council of NSW Project Aware Foundation | Queensland Conservation Council | Responsible Runners | Sea Life Conservation Trust | Surfrider Foundation Australia | Take 3 | Tangaroa Blue Foundation | Tasmanian Conservation Trust | Total Environment Centre | Two Hands Project | Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld | The Lane Cove Sustainability Action Group | Positive Change For Marine Life Boomerang Bags – Keep Bundeena Beautiful – Plastic Bag Free NSW | Plastic Bag Free Victoria | Plastic Bag Free Moreland | Plastic Bag Free Torquay | Plastic Bag Free Inner West | 10c Makes Sense | Plastic Bag Free Frankston | Plastic Bag Free Echuca | Moama Bottle For Boto | Ocean Grove Coast Care | Barwon Heads Sustainability | Green Music Australia | Sea Shepherd Australia | Plastic Pollution Solutions | Plastic Free Manly | Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhoods Alliance.

Find more information & resources on our website.

WWW.PLASTICBAGFREESW.ORG

WWW.BOOMERANGALLIANCE.ORG.AU

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