

13 November 2015

## Call for Action on Plastic Bags!

With environment ministers due to discuss action on banning plastic bags, 48 national, state and local groups from around Australia have called on the ministers to adopt a world's best policy.

“We have some of the most pristine and beautiful marine environments, but plastic bags and other plastic pollution are having a devastating effect, especially on marine life,” said Jeff Angel, Director of the Boomerang Alliance.

“With the CSIRO Marine Debris Report 2014 estimating there are over 124 billion individual pieces of visible plastic littering the Australian coastline – and a large legacy of plastic from previous years becoming microplastic – action needs to be taken on multiple fronts.”

“We estimate Australian will use about 9 billion plastic bags this year. The groups congratulate South Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and ACT for taking plastic bag ban action and calls for new action by other states as the quickest way to help clean up the environment.”

The groups are calling for improvements to the current plastic bag ban regulations to avoid loopholes and ‘biodegradable alternatives’ that are no better for marine life.

“These substitute bags are still deadly for marine creatures and the smaller bits of plastic are becoming part of our food chain in shocking numbers. We want a ban on plastic bags up to 70 microns and the policy aimed at maximum adoption of reusable bags for shopping”.

“Plastic bag bans bring about positive changes in behaviour. In South Australia, where a ban on plastic bags is in place 76% of people always reuse bags when doing the grocery shopping, compared to 19% in non-ban states.<sup>#</sup> A recent Omnipol survey\* found community support in SA for the ban was 81% - so it's a popular measure,” Mr Angel said.

# ABS, Environment Views and Behaviours, 2012

\* July 2015