

GLOBAL COMMITMENT TO PLASTIC POLLUTION ‘PLANETARY CRISIS’ - What is Australia’s response?

With more than 200 countries signing up to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) pledge to eliminate plastic pollution in our oceans in Nairobi last week, Boomerang Alliance is asking state and federal environment ministers: What is Australia’s response? Over 8 million metric tonnes of plastic enter the ocean annually around the globe. Plastic bag bans and container deposit schemes are a good start, but what more can we be doing?

“The Australian Government’s inactivity on the eradication of plastic pollution and the environmental threat it represents, highlights a significant disconnect between our international commitments and the implementation of comprehensive domestic measures to address the problem at home,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Boomerang Alliance, “While the UNEA resolution lacks binding targets, this places greater responsibility on domestic legislators to ensure that ambitious objectives are adopted to drive the solutions.”

In NSW alone, almost 90% of consumers believe that littering is an important issue facing their state¹. With more than 2 million beverage containers being collected within the first week of the NSW Container Deposit Scheme, proven programmes can deliver a profound impact on the amount of litter entering our marine environment.

“We need to hear more from our Federal Government on how they plan to honour Australia’s pledge commitment to ‘step up actions to, by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities’²,” Mr Angel added.

Boomerang Alliance calls on the Turnbull Government to commit Australia’s support to the UN Environment Programme’s #CleanSeas and join more than 40 other countries actively taking steps to eliminate plastic pollution from the world’s oceans.

The Alliance also calls on state and federal governments to implement a Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan across their respective jurisdictions. .

“Our oceans are the foundation of all life on earth. If we don’t support them, they can’t support us,” Mr Angel concluded, “Government action on marine plastic pollution must happen now.”

END

Further information:

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¹ www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/premiers-priorities/keeping-our-environment-clean/

² UN Environment Assembly Draft Resolution on Marine Litter and Microplastics (UNEP/EA.3/L.20), Nairobi, Dec 6th 2017, <https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/k1709154.docx>

Jeff Angel – Director, Boomerang Alliance

Jeff Angel is Director of the Boomerang Alliance, a collaboration of 47 allied groups and the Total Environment Centre. Jeff has worked for policy, business and legal changes across a wide spectrum of environmental issues (city and country) for over 40 years including protection of rainforests and wilderness, air quality, urban river regeneration, Sydney's Green Games, land clearing, endangered species and climate change. He has been prominent in debates about waste and recycling and led the campaign for the introduction of a container deposit system in Australia.

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