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ACOR AND BOOMERANG ALLIANCE ANNOUNCE THE 5 BIG WASTE POLICIES FOR FEDERAL ELECTION

The Australian Council of Recycling (ACOR) and national recycling campaign group, the Boomerang Alliance, have today released their 5 priority actions the next Commonwealth Government needs to implement to solve Australia's waste and recycling crisis.

"Talk is cheap and that's largely all we have so far seen while delay is prohibitively expensive for the environment, business, local councils and the community", the groups said.

"With Asian markets for recyclable materials from Australia closing down and local governments confronted with potentially sending their kerbside recycling to landfill, it's time to recognise that the system Australians value is greatly under threat. The National Waste Policy (NWP), recently agreed upon with all States, tries to set out an agenda for the future, but its aims cannot be achieved without investment and policy support," said Peter Shmigel, CEO of ACOR.

"At the same time the world is facing a plastic pollution epidemic caused by plastic wastes that can't be reused, composted or recycled. Australia must play its part in breaking that excessive plastic habit," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Boomerang Alliance of 48 groups.

"Without concerted and effective action, Australia is set to go back 50 years to the days when waste was dumped or burned and the only things recycled were the bottles collected for a refund," said Angel.

The two organisations are calling on all political parties to support five key measures.

The 5 Big Policies for the next Commonwealth Government:

- \$150 million investment in a **National Recycling Industry Development Fund** along with clean energy funds to build a domestic recycling industry and create 500 new jobs and attack climate change
- **Tax incentives for a business and industry 'Buy Recycled'** program to meet a 30% average recycled content of products by 2025
- **Strengthen the Product Stewardship Act** on imported packaging and to meet packaging targets of 70% composted or recycled by 2025
- Adopt a **Plastic Pollution Reduction Strategy** within 6 months of Government to address escalating plastic waste problems in industry, agriculture and community sectors and in the terrestrial and marine environment
- Develop new **national data metrics on waste and litter** to accurate record waste, litter and resource recovery statistics and recognise the broad social, environmental and economic benefits of resource recovery.

call on the next Federal Government to:

- **save recycling**
- **grow jobs**
- **prevent pollution**
- **secure resources**

While work has been undertaken on a new National Waste Policy (NWP) during 2018, there is much to do to enact ambitious goals and build a sustainable industry that will deliver economic value, jobs and environment protection, and community confidence. We assert such goals should be mandatory as 'go-slow' review processes or voluntary programs are leaving Australia behind the world – economically and environmentally.

The situation is critical, as Asian markets for Australian recyclable material are closing down, and as leading economies move to secure resources through new domestic capabilities in recycling and reprocessing. Australia needs to fill its recycling gap.

Proposed NWP goals should be regarded as a minimum with the focus on collection, reprocessing and incentive programs so that recovered resources are being recycled or composted or reused (rather than relying on them simply having material qualities that make them potentially recyclable, compostable or reusable).

There is undoubtedly broad and deep public support for this path in Australia.

Action is urgent.

ACOR and Boomerang Alliance call for the following 5 KEY MEASURES:

1. INVESTMENT

\$150 million investment in a domestic recycling industry is needed NOW and can create 500 new jobs while removing the equivalent of 50,000 cars in greenhouse gas emissions. Existing (and new entrants) involved in sorting and reprocessing have the capacity and desire to grow. The Commonwealth should contribute and arrange for all States and Territories (through their waste levies) to contribute to a National Recycling Industry Development Scheme.

A Resource Recovery Incentive should be constructed via different tax levels for virgin and recycled content covering imported or material produced in Australia.

Further, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation should dedicate funds to infrastructure and projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the production of recycled content products and materials.

To assist industry development, genuine residuals (a small percentage) from recycling should be exempt from waste levies, subject to strong quality controls.

2. BUY RECYCLED

Provide tax incentives to business and industry to 'buy recycled.' The incentives should be designed to meet to have 30% average recycled content of all goods and infrastructure procurement by 2025. The Commonwealth and states must introduce their own procurement targets consistent with this goal.

3. PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP

Strengthen the Product Stewardship Act to require eco-design and resource recovery standards on all imported packaging. If there is no significant progress within two years through the APCO plan, introduce a mandatory stewardship scheme for domestically-used packaging that meets the APCO target of having at least, 70% of all packaging composted or recycled by 2025, and includes full funding of kerbside recycling.

Adopt a transparent and accountable method to fast track product stewardship for hazardous materials such as batteries, e-waste and solar panels in concert with landfill bans. Ensure a wide range of benefits are included and quantified in any benefit-cost study.

Reinstate an expert, external advisory group to drive efforts.

4. PLASTIC POLLUTION

Adopt a Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan with funding and clear actions using a variety of effective instruments (bans, refunds, support for alternatives), within 6 months of the election.

Play a leading role in global waste and marine plastics reduction efforts. Contribute, through foreign aid budgets, to clean up and resource recovery industry development in countries in our region.

5. DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Develop new national data metrics on waste and litter reduction, recycling and resource recovery performance and their socio-economic benefits. This should specifically include economic opportunities and job creation, greenhouse gas abatement, toxicity avoidance, environmental and human health impacts, regional development contributions and future innovations.