

Tuesday, 2 April 2019

## **FED ELECTION 2019: ALP Recycling and Waste Strategy is a start...but it needs more bite**

Over the weekend, Bill Shorten proudly announced Labor's recycling and waste strategy.

Under the proposed legislation, an ALP Federal Government will introduce national bans on lightweight, single-use plastic bags by 2021.

Microbeads will also be outlawed in a bill designed to protect vulnerable wildlife and reduce the amount of waste generated.

Additional initiatives include 'a national container deposit scheme, a \$60 million national recycling fund and \$15 million to help neighbouring countries clean up the Pacific Ocean.'

And along with the appointment of a national waste commissioner, Labor would set mandatory targets for all government departments to purchase products made out of recycled materials.

This would include seeking to ensure all major roads funded by the Federal government contained recycled products.

And while the series of announcements recognises the issues, Boomerang Alliance believes it's short on mandated measures and investment in light of the EU Parliament's overwhelming vote to phase out single-use plastic takeaway products last week.

*'The recognition we need to build our domestic recycling industry and \$60million in funding in response to rejection of our contaminated kerbside material by Asia, is welcome; as is a focus on plastic pollution caused by single, short term use plastics,'* said Jeff Angel, Director of the Alliance.

*'But we need to do more and Boomerang will be prosecuting the case in coming weeks.'*

Boomerang Alliance believes the investment should also have been supported through 'buy recycled' tax incentives for industry and mandated recycling procurement by government.

*'An important piece of the puzzle is mandatory rules for recycled content in products. This needs to extend beyond government to the private sector. It's the only way to cement reprocessing of waste into the economy and save resources and the environment. Anything less is fiddling at the edges,'* Mr Angel said.

Notably, the introduction of a national container deposit scheme will see hold-out states Tasmania and Victoria not forced to join.

*'There's an inconsistent approach with, on the one hand, implementing a national ban on plastic bags and microbeads but failing to ensure Victoria and Tasmania enact container deposit schemes. A bottle refund scheme is proven to be eminently effective and is saving billions of containers from being dumped – Victoria in particular, is becoming a recycling basket case and must be brought into the modern age with a refund scheme.'*

Labor's strategy also ignores [key measures](#) to ensure tightening and enhancement of a National Waste Policy laid out by Boomerang Alliance and Australian Council of Recycling earlier this month.

*'Whilst the ALP endorse a policy of all packaging being reusable, compostable or recyclable by 2025, this does not mean packaging will be. Strengthening the Product Stewardship Act to require all packaging to be reused, composted or recycled is what is really needed,' Mr Angel added.*

And Boomerang Alliance believes a plastic pollution reduction strategy to set clear funding and actions using a variety of effective instruments (bans, refunds, support for alternatives), to set a future direction to reduce single-use plastics wasted or littered, should have been included.

*'The public and many industry sectors recognise that packaging is a significant problem but the problems include all single-use and disposable plastic waste.'*

*'The ALP have promised \$15million for combating plastic pollution in the Pacific in concert with our neighbours – a much needed boost to this global problem that is devastating marine life. The new framework for product stewardship with a National Waste Commissioner will help push industry into a range of product stewardship programs, stopping the waste of valuable resources,' Mr Angel said.*