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Less Waste, Less Plastic – More Solutions

The Boomerang Alliance and its 48 national, state and local NGO allies have identified two critical environment issues for the next Commonwealth Government - Saving Recycling and Phasing Out Single Use Plastic Takeaway Products.

“Our message is ‘Less Waste, Less Plastic – More Solutions’. We are seeking commitments from all political parties to support policies that address these two issues of great concern to the community. The Commonwealth government has a major role to play,” said Jeff Angel, Director of the Boomerang Alliance.

“With Asian markets for recyclable materials from Australia closing down and local governments confronted with sending most of their kerbside recycling to landfill, it's time to recognise that this system Australians greatly value is under severe 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 constructive investment and policy support.”

“Claims in a current affairs show last night that recycled plastics exported to other countries for recycling are not being actually or safely recycled are just another story feeding into a growing loss of confidence in recycling. Whether true or half true or not at all, government must confront our recycling crisis for the sake of our economy and environment.”

“This is the reason why Boomerang alliance has placed investment in domestic recycling at the top of our election asks. The Labor party have promised a \$60 million investment in domestic recycling. We need committed funding from the Coalition too; as well as ‘Buy Australian Recycled Content’ rules.”

“At the same time the world is facing a plastic pollution epidemic caused by plastic wastes that can't be reused, composted or recycled and end up in the ocean. Australia must play its part in breaking the dangerous plastic habit.”

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

Our Asks:

Funding for Recycling Industry Development Fund. We have asked for \$150m. This fund will help develop a domestic reprocessing industry to recycle products collected by households and business as an alternative to sending them overseas; to landfill; or incineration. Included in this are proposals for tax incentives for business and government procurement policy to ‘buy recycled.’

Phase out date for single use takeaway plastics (coffee cups/lids, straws, cups and containers and cutlery). This follows the EU decision to phase out some key items in 2021 and increasing calls for similar action around the country. There are plenty of alternatives and will contribute to achieving the 2025 goals for all packaging to be composted or recycled.

National bans on plastic bags and plastic microbeads and introduce CDS in every State. This meets Commonwealth promises internationally and puts pressure on remaining states (Victoria and Tasmania) to act. The current voluntary microbead ban has not gone far enough and has loopholes.

The Product Stewardship Act should be strengthened by including eco-design requirements on packaging that minimise use and ensures packaging can be reused, composted or recycled. If we don't make industry act, then local governments, waste industry and consumers and the environment will continue to suffer the cost of disposal and from litter.

Adopt a Plastic Pollution Reduction Strategy. This is an on-going program to examine and find solutions to other single use plastics. It involves engagement with industry and community sectors in retail, agriculture, industry and marine environments.

Support global action and assist our pacific neighbours to address plastic waste and litter. We want the Commonwealth to be pro-actively involved in global initiatives and, in particular, look to provide specific bi-lateral funding to Pacific and near neighbours to assist with plastic litter clean up and development of community-based recycling operations.

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