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Reducing Plastic Pollution: election policies make headway

Most States and Territories in Australia have passed laws or propose laws to reduce their single use plastics. Tasmania is one of the few exceptions.

'Tasmania should not be the last State to ban problem single-use plastic takeaway items and stop plastic pollution. It's a natural move as Tassie has an enviable reputation as a green and healthy state,' said Jeff Angel, Director of the Boomerang Alliance.

Boomerang Alliance asked the three major parties about their policies on a container deposit scheme having a return rate above 90%; and their plans to ban damaging takeaway single-use plastics.

'We received some pretty good responses:'

- Container Deposit Scheme - all parties support the introduction of the scheme, but only the Greens plan to set a return rate above 90% (world's best practice is 95%.
- Single Use Plastic Bans - The Greens supported new laws to ban problem single-use plastic items, consistent with other Australian jurisdictions by 2022; and the Libs will meet the by 2025 national target for phasing out unnecessary and problematic plastics and ban them in Government facilities and at events on public lands by 2023.
- Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan - The Liberals have committed \$1 million over 4 years for a Plastics Implementation Plan, draft legislation and a transition plan for business. Labor are less committal and will explore options for a long-term plastics plan. The Greens support a plan.

'Clearly the next Parliament should see action on plastic pollution. What Tasmania really needs is to catch up with other States and introduce plastic bans as soon as possible. We urge all parties to work together,' Mr Angel said.

According to latest Clean Up Australia data for Tasmania, 41% of all litter was beverage and takeaway food packaging.

Five States/Territories have either passed laws or proposed laws to ban certain takeaway plastics such as straws, cutlery and containers. NSW are likely to announce shortly, leaving the NT and Tasmania without any plans.

This month (April 2021) the Commonwealth and all State and Territory Governments supported a national phase-out of problematic and unnecessary plastic products including straws, cutlery and expanded polystyrene containers by 2025 (MEM communique April 2021).