



MEDIA RELEASE
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Will NSW, QLD and VIC move on plastic bags?

More than 50 environment groups, representing millions of Australians and several plastic bag monsters have called on the Environment Ministers of Queensland, NSW and Victoria to take action on single use plastic bags.

"Everyone knows we have a problem. Single-use plastic bags are a waste of resources and when littered are deadly to wildlife. Plastic doesn't go away, it only breaks up into smaller pieces contaminating the marine environment with dangerous microplastics and the food chain, ending up on our dinner plates", the groups have told the Environment ministers who will be meeting next week in Sydney on 25 November.

"SA, NT, Tasmania and ACT have plastic bag bans and despite all states committing to a ban in 2005, NSW, Qld and Vic have done nothing."

Ian Kiernan AO, Chairman of Cleanup Australia explained, "Nearly 7% of plastic rubbish reported by Clean Up volunteers is single use lightweight plastic bags. The most likely source of these bags is impulse purchasing or when contents are consumed in transit. Many are left behind on benches, under seats, jammed into crevices or simply dropped. Even when binned they too easily blow away.

"As we approach the 2017 national Clean Up campaign it's timely for states lagging behind the ACT, NT, SA and TAS to join forces to make sure single use items such as retail bags don't end up on our streets and beaches, in our parks, bushland and waterways."

Jeff Angel said: "The idea that business is opposed to taking action to reduce marine plastic pollution is simply wrong. Today we have a team up in Northern NSW to start discussions with business and local government about how to ban plastic bags and they definitely have an appetite for action."

"Ballina MP Tamara Smith and the Byron Bay Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey of over 100 local businesses around Byron Bay - a staggering 94% of local businesses were prepared to ban plastic bags - the governments should join them."

Every year Australians use 6 billion single-use shopping bags = 250 per person! 180 million plastic bags are estimated to end up in the environment and are deadly to wildlife – breaking up into microplastics and entering our food chain.

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