

3 December 2015

Plastic Bag Ban – move by NSW ALP Welcomed

With 50million plastic bags littered every year in NSW and falling behind other states with bans on single use plastic bags – the ALP’s announcement of a ban policy and private members bill are significant steps.

“State action is the way to go to get quick action against this environmental menace. The laws of other states like South Australia and the Northern Territory embarrass NSW with its inaction. Not only do the bags when still whole kill marine life like turtles which mistake them for food– the bags then break up into thousands of pieces of microplastic and enter the marine food chain and eventually us,” said Jeff Angel, Director of the Boomerang Alliance.

“Plastic bag bans bring about positive changes in behaviour. In South Australia 76% of people always reuse bags when doing the grocery shopping, compared to 19% in non-ban states[#]. A recent Omnipol survey found community support in SA for the ban was 81%* - so it’s a popular measure,” Mr Angel said.

Australia’s environment ministers are due to meet in mid-December to discuss plastic bag policies. NSW has prepared a policy options paper.

Forty eight environment groups have called for improvements to the current plastic bag ban regulations to avoid loopholes and ‘biodegradable alternatives’ that are no better for marine life.

“These substitute bags are still deadly for marine creatures and the smaller bits of plastic are becoming part of our food chain in shocking numbers. We want a ban on plastic bags up to 70 microns and the policy aimed at maximum adoption of reusable bags for shopping”, Mr Angel said.

ABS, Environment Views and Behaviours, 2012

* July 2015

The Boomerang Alliance allies are: - AFROCAB - Australian Conservation Foundation - Australian Marine Conservation Society - Arid Lands Environment Centre - Beach Patrol - Cairns and Far North Coast Environment Centre - Clean Up Australia - Conservation Council ACT Region - Conservation Council of South Australia - Conservation Council of Western Australia - Cooks River Alliance - Environment Centre NT - Environment Tasmania - Environment Victoria - Friends of the Earth - Greenpeace Australia Pacific - LEAD Group - Living Ocean - Local Government NSW - Mineral Policy Institute - Nature Conservation Council of NSW - Project AWARE Foundation - Queensland Conservation Council - Responsible Runners - SEA LIFE Conservation Fund - Surfrider Foundation Australia - Take 3 - Tangaroa Blue Foundation - Tasmanian Conservation Trust - Total Environment Centre - Two Hands Project - Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland