

Monday, 16 April 2018

## **AUSTRALIA URGED TO JOIN COMMONWEALTH CLEAN OCEANS ALLIANCE**

Australia has yet to declare if it will join the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance to be established at this week's Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting on London. The UK government is highlighting action on plastic pollution – but what is the Turnbull government attitude? the Boomerang Alliance of 47 groups asked today.

“Four nations - [New Zealand](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Vanuatu](#) and [Ghana](#) – have already joined and Australia with a magnificent ocean estate under its stewardship has said nothing. Nor do we have an effective national plastic pollution action plan,” said Jeff Angel, Director of the Alliance.

“Every week more alarming information appears about the spread and concentration of plastic pollution which will last for hundreds of years. Australia has not escaped this plight and the plastic infesting our oceans, particularly along the east and southern coasts comes from us. Yet while a few states are beginning to take action, notably Queensland, our national government has nothing to say.”

“A weak threat abatement plan is all we have and it does not implement concrete action – largely focussing on research and leaving legal action to the states. It's a national problem demanding strong national action,” Mr Angel said.

“The UK government has allocated over £61m to its program, including assistance to developing countries. Australia should take up its fair share of the load to stop this global menace. We also need a national law to prevent the use of plastic microbeads; national coverage of plastic bag bans (NSW has not acted); and national rules requiring the use of recycled material in products so there is a commercial incentive to capture single use plastic and not dump it.”

**END**