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Queensland steps forward on polluting heavyweight plastics bags & coffee cups

The decision by the Queensland Government to ban all disposable plastic shopping bags steps up the attack on polluting single use plastic items, with the plan to introduce a Reusable Shopping Bag Standard to ensure all shopping bags available from retailers will be genuinely reusable in the future. Disposable coffee cups are now also centre of the agenda.

'The introduction of a Reusable Shopping bag standard is an important precedent that will combat greenwash and waste. It's the missing piece of the jigsaw we have all been waiting for. The key to reducing heavyweight plastic bag use is in facilitating shoppers to repeatedly use their own bags. Reuse will also reduce consumer costs,' said Toby Hutcheon, Campaign Manager for the Boomerang Alliance of 55 groups.

'A Reusable Bag Standard, as proposed by the Boomerang Alliance working with the National Retailers Association, means that all reusable shopping bags will need to be designed for multiple use by achieving a minimum 125 shopping cycles, be strong and durable, made from recycled materials and collected for recycling at the end of their useful life. Bags that don't pass the test will not be available. It spells the end of heavyweight greenwash reusable bags.'

'We urge all other States and Territories to join Queensland in regulating a Reusable Bag Standard and introducing a ban on non-compliant bags by September 2023.'

'With the State Government aiming to phase out disposable coffee cups, the Boomerang Alliance is calling for urgent action by other States to join Queensland in taking this action. We need a national and harmonised ban on problem coffee cups by 2023. An estimated 1 billion are used and end up littered or in landfill every year. Boomerang will be releasing a policy in coming months. Boomerang will be releasing a policy in coming months.'

Queensland has announced its second tranche of plastic bans. It includes a ban on plastic stemmed cotton buds, microbeads in personal care and cleaning products, and loose polystyrene packaging

'Of particular significance is the ban on the mass release of lighter than air (helium) balloons, a ban that will be warmly welcomed by all those concerned about the devastating effects of these balloons on marine life,' Mr Hutcheon said.