

LEADING AUSTRALIA'S TRANSITION TO A WASTE FREE FUTURE



“Australians are the second largest consumers of single use plastic packaging in the world* and we only recycle 18% of the plastic we use. It's time for change.
*Plastic Waste Maker Index, **Minderoo Foundation**

OUR VISION

We envisage an Australia that leads the world in eliminating waste and plastic pollution through a circular economy approach.

A nation where reusable packaging is the norm; where producers are responsible for the entire lifecycle of their packaging; and where communities, businesses, and governments work together to protect our environment for future generations.

Through strategic advocacy, practical engagement programs, and collaborative partnerships, the Boomerang Alliance is making this vision reality—one policy win, one business partnership, and one eliminated piece of plastic – at a time.



85% Of Australians are concerned about plastic waste pollution.

88% Support a soft plastics collection service funded by packaging producers

73% Support producers paying for packaging collection and recovery costs

*YouGov Poll 2024

OUR CAMPAIGNS

1

Single-Use Plastics Phase-Out

We are driving high impact, nationally consistent bans on problematic takeaway plastics across all Australian jurisdictions, with comprehensive plans addressing retail, business and marine environments.

2

Making Reusables Commonplace

Our 'Choose to Reuse' campaign targets mandatory 30% reusable packaging by 2030, starting with takeaway cups and food containers with the ultimate goal of shifting to a reuse and refill economy.

3

Container Refund Scheme Excellence

Ensuring Container Refund Schemes operate in every state and territory, with continuous improvements including expanded container types and an increased refund to drive 85+% recovery.

4

A Mandatory Product Stewardship Scheme For Packaging Including Extended Producer Responsibility

that makes producers responsible for the full life cycle of their packaging. This includes the fast-tracking of a comprehensive national soft plastic collection and recovery program.

5

Plastic Free Places: Our national engagement program working directly with thousands of businesses to transition away from single-use plastics, shifting to reuse and refill.

IT'S TIME FOR **CHANGE**

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Policy & Position Snapshot

LEADING AUSTRALIA'S TRANSITION TO A WASTE-FREE FUTURE



STRATEGIC APPROACH – OUR FOUR PILLARS:

Policy Advocacy: Direct engagement, supported by community mobilisation, with all levels of government to secure evidence-based environmental legislation and regulation.

Practical demonstration projects showing businesses and consumers that plastic-free alternatives work and are economically viable.

Collaborative Action: Building powerful partnerships with allied organisations, industry stakeholders, and community groups to amplify impact.

Evidence-Based Solutions: Championing international best practices while developing Australian-specific policy solutions.

OUR KEY POLICIES AND POSITIONS:

- **Global Plastics Treaty** and funding for regional plastic pollution initiatives
- **National Packaging Reforms**
 - Best Practice Packaging Product Stewardship Model
 - Phase out of problematic single use plastics
 - National standards for packaging
 - Soft Plastics Collection
 - National Circular Economy
- **Microplastics**
- **Reuse Economy**
- **Container Refund Schemes**
- **Plastic Free Places Program**
- **Helium Balloons**
- **Cigarette Butts**
- **PFAS + other chemicals**
- **Energy from Waste**
- **Community Clean Ups and Citizen Science**

Our positions are periodically reviewed in consultation with our allies.



The Year Ahead...

OUR 2026 GOALS

- **Comprehensive Packaging Product Stewardship** legislation incl. Extended Producer Responsibility
- **Nationally consistent, expanded plastic bans across all jurisdictions**
- **Mandatory reusable packaging targets with government backing**
- **Plastic Free Places program extension & elimination of 5+million single use plastic items**
- **Positioning Australia as Asia-Pacific leader in circular economy policy**
- **Expanded container refund schemes**

Policy & Position Summaries

LEADING AUSTRALIA'S TRANSITION

TO A WASTE-FREE FUTURE



01 A global Marine Plastic Pollution Treaty

Addressing marine plastic pollution at a global scale is essential. We support the Australian Government's 'high ambition' agenda for an effective global treaty. This includes the delivery of a strong treaty that stops plastic pollution at the source through binding measures and targets to reduce plastic production and consumption. This embraces international and national policies to phase out problem plastics, significantly reduce plastic production and use as well as addressing the recovery of used plastics and the cleaning up of ocean plastics.

- We support an enforceable Treaty with specific targets for reduction in plastic use and pollution, and recovery of all plastics, across the whole lifecycle of plastics
- Australia should lead by example and introduce world best packaging practices and bans, based upon a circular economy approach, through EPR regulations
- Provide funding for clean-up and citizen science programs in Australia, and to assist regional neighbours to address plastic waste and pollution problems; and effective arrangements to prevent shipping wastes being discarded at sea.



Plastic pollution is already in nature, in our oceans and even in our bodies. If we continue as on this trajectory, the whole world will be drowning in plastic pollution – with massive consequences for our planetary, economic and human health.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP.



Policy & Position Summaries | Cont'd

02 National Packaging Reforms

We support a mandatory producer responsibility model to eliminate unnecessary, wasteful single use packaging. Producers must be responsible for the costs associated with the manufacture, use and recovery of their packaging materials across their entire life cycle.

2.1 Best Practice Product Stewardship Model to address packaging wastes and cost of living pressures

Introduce an Extended Producer Scheme (EPR) for Packaging by 2026 with full cost recovery by producers and mandated targets.

Targets should be based on current National Waste Plan and also include packaging reduction (20%) and reuse (30%) by 2030

In the last 25 years of voluntary product stewardship, little progress has been made to address problem single use packaging. Plastic recovery rates today are lower than they were reported in 1999 (APCO 2024).

The Commonwealth Government has proposed reforms and received advice from most industry and community respondents supporting a mandatory extended producer responsibility scheme.

A producer funded scheme will make those who produce packaging responsible for collection and recovery costs. By setting mandatory targets, the scheme can ensure that packaging wastes are addressed while reduction, reuse and recycled contents are maximised. With producers taking full responsibility for the cost recovery of their packaging and targeted strategies to increase the use of reusables, councils can reduce waste collection and service fees to ratepayers and price imposts from single use items will cease – easing cost of living pressures.

2.2 Phase out of problematic single use plastics

Support the phase out of problem and unnecessary packaging and items by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, including the regulated introduction of reusable packaging.

Over the past 10 years, states and territories have introduced bans on problematic and unnecessary single use plastic items. This has significantly reduced both plastic waste and litter.

Environment Ministers have agreed to act on 24 key items. The Commonwealth should continue to support these jurisdictional actions to phase out problem plastics and support preferred alternatives. Additional Commonwealth actions may also be necessary, as previously outlined in the Plastics Plan (2021).

2.3 Establish national standards for packaging

Introduce national standards and labelling for reusable, compostable and recyclable packaging. Standards must require that products labelled as such can be reused, composed and recycled in practice and at scale.

There are no adequate or nationally consistent standards for packaging. These should be established to assist retailers with their procurement practices and provide consumers with accurate information. Too often consumers are given misleading, greenwash advice.

All consumer packaging placed into the market should be either reusable, compostable or recyclable. To be labelled as such they need to be designed and have consumer services available that ensure their recovery.



Resources

- Product Stewardship Model incl. EPR
- Product Stewardship Model Factsheet
- Federal Government Ask
- State & Territory Ban Benchmark Comparison



Policy & Position Summaries | Cont'd

02 National Packaging Reforms

2.4 Soft Plastics Collection

Urgently introduce a mandatory product stewardship scheme for the collection and recovery of soft plastics

Fast track an EPR scheme for soft plastics in 2025/26. Since the demise of REDcycle virtually all of the estimated 150,000 tonnes of discarded household soft plastics are being wasted or stockpiled by consumers at home. According to Clean Up Australia, soft plastics are now the most littered items in Australia, representing 34% of all litter collected.

A new convenient collection service that ensures these materials are recycled is urgently needed. An EPR scheme for soft plastics should be based upon producer full cost of recovery and provide collection services convenient to consumers. These could include in-store, kerbside or self-haul, depending upon the circumstances of communities.

Any soft plastics collection must be a self-improvement model that reduces the use of problem plastics and switches to more reusable options, as outlined under circular economy principles (see below)

2.5 National Circular Economy

Introduce national regulations for the adoption of Circular Economy Principles by all Australian Governments based on Commonwealth Government CE Advisory Taskforce recommendations.

A circular economy approach is essential to efficiently manage products through the economy, without creating waste and pollution.

The Commonwealth Circular Economy Taskforce has produced principles, based upon international best practice. To ensure consistency, these Commonwealth principles should be regulated and applied in all state and territory jurisdictions.

Principles of a Circular Economy*

- To eliminate waste and pollution
- Circulate products and materials in the economy, based upon their highest resource value
- Regenerate nature by supporting natural processes

** Please note, the Boomerang Alliance is a member of the Ellen McArthur Foundation and we have adopted their Circular Economy definition.*

Policy & Position Summaries | Cont'd

03 Plastic Free Places Program

This Boomerang Alliance project operates around the country encouraging cafes and food outlets to switch practices away from single use plastic food ware. As the project expands, an increasing focus is being placed on encouraging the mass uptake of reusable food ware in these sectors. A reusable coffee cup pilot is currently underway in Port Douglas, QLD.

An online advice service is currently available for WA and SA businesses.

As of August 2025, the program had 2,496 business members and had eliminated over 39 million problem single use plastics from use.



Available resources: guides, best practice case studies, factsheets, posters, calculators. Further information: www.plasticfreeplaces.org

04 Reusable Cups, Containers and other Practices

The Boomerang Alliance is calling for a Commonwealth Government Reusables Strategy and complementary regulations by all State and Territories that support the uptake of reusable products.

The Boomerang Alliance supports the increased uptake of reusable packaging and foodware. Many in the community already use BYO coffee cups and other containers. However, the uptake is generally left to individual action. We seek government intervention to make reusables commonplace.

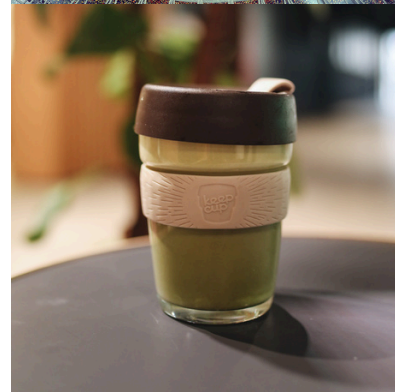
Reusable uptake is initially most easily achieved through a focus on:

- Public events, festivals and sports stadiums
- Takeaway outlets and restaurants
- Supermarkets and retail outlets
- On trains, boats and planes
- And in 'controlled environments' such as government and corporate office blocks, places of work, public institutions, hospitality precincts and hotels/accommodation



Available Resources:

- Reuse Declaration & Factsheet
- Reusable shopping bag position
- Single use cups and lids position + infographic
- Choose to Reuse Report
- Guide to Reuse at Stadiums and Major Events



Policy & Position Summaries

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05 Expanding Container Refund Schemes

The Boomerang Alliance is seeking a harmonised national approach for container refund schemes that ensures a network operator/coordinator split, with a focus on raising the return rate through an increase in the refund.

Every State and Territory in Australia now has a container refund scheme. The Boomerang Alliance is now seeking to have all CDS schemes build in a continuous improvement strategy designed to maximise return rates and support circular economy goals. Return rates should be above 90%.

Improvements to each scheme include:

- An increase of the refund to 20+ cents in line with CPI increases
- The inclusion of wine and spirit bottles
- Expand the scope to include large juice containers, milk containers, and other non-beverage glass and plastic containers
- All bottle tops to be tethered
- Make reusable bottles and cans eligible under each scheme

06 Microplastics

Develop a national microplastic pollution reduction plan (as unanimously recommended by the joint party House of Reps inquiry (2024)). With microplastics increasingly being implicated in human health impacts, as well as the marine food chain, urgent actions are required to investigate and identify those potential health impacts and to address reduction of microplastic pollution.

07 Cigarette Butts

Cigarette filters should be included in the harmonised list of plastic products to be phased out nationally.

NSW and SA have already called on the federal government to take a national approach to dealing with the most littered on item in the country and the National Plastics Plan already has a specific action to tackle cigarette butt waste.

Scientific reviews completed by members of the Australian medical community has indicated that plastic filters do not provide any benefit to human health, yet damage the environment significantly, as the most littered item in the country.

Policy & Position Summaries | Cont'd

08 Helium Balloons

The Boomerang Alliance opposes the deliberate release of any helium filled balloons (with the exception of balloons used for weather or scientific purposes). They cause proven harm to marine wildlife. Our position calls for:

- A ban on any release of balloons – every State and Territory to introduce specific laws or amendments to existing laws to clearly ban any release of helium balloons (any number)
- A ban on the sale of helium to the public to inflate balloons, with helium only available from businesses registered as balloon industry suppliers who can control the chain of custody, prevent releases, and arrange correct disposal (a national register of suppliers to be established or helium suppliers to provide only to registered industry suppliers)
- Every State and Territory to advise all relevant agencies, local government and event/hospitality sectors about the ban and provide adequate policing to monitor and impose financial penalties to ensure compliance.

09 (Perfluoroalkyl Substances) or PFAS Chemicals

PFAS chemicals are a broad category of chemicals used as fire retardants, for oil clean-up operations, as stain resisters on furnishings and, in the case of packaging, as grease proofing. In packaging it is used as a barrier to hold hot or greasy foods and liquids. For example, pizza boxes, hot chip paper or food containers. The packaging could either be recyclable or compostable.

The Boomerang Alliance view is that PFAS and any other harmful substances must be removed from all food packaging. It is the direct contact of these chemicals to food being consumed that represents the most likely way these chemicals can enter the body.

10 Energy from Waste

EfW comes in many forms. It can include anaerobic digestion or landfill/sewage gas capture, technologies that the Boomerang Alliance supports. It also includes refuse derived fuels and mixed waste incineration, technologies that add to GHG emissions, pollution and undermine recycling.

The Boomerang Alliance opposes the thermal treatment (e.g, incineration, conversion to fuel) of disposed mixed materials. It is counter to the circular economy and has significant pollution dangers. It can also cannibalise organic and recyclable material that would otherwise have a greater resource value.

11 Community Litter Clean up and Citizen Science projects

Continue to support and fund community litter clean ups and citizen science projects and including funding support for regional neighbours. We recommend a \$200 M fund be allocated for this purpose.