

For Immediate Release

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Woolworths, Coles, Harris Farm Bag Ban puts heat on Environment Ministers

The Boomerang Alliance has welcomed the announcements by Coles, Woolworths and Harris Farm, they will ban lightweight plastic bags nationally from July 2018. This will take over 6 billion bags out of circulation every year.

‘This is a very welcome and significant decision and we urge the three states, NSW, Victoria and Western Australia, who have yet to ban lightweight plastic bags to act so we can have a national ban covering all stores,’ said Jeff Angel, director of the Boomerang Alliance of 47 groups.

‘Environment Ministers meet on 28 July – they should not miss this date with history.’

Removing plastic bags in Australia is a significant first step in reducing this countries disposable plastic use and reducing threats to wildlife. Over 3 million tonnes of plastic is used in Australia every year, with most disposable plastics either landfilled or littered. It is estimated that between 100,000 and 120,000 tonnes of disposable plastic is littered annually. That is equivalent to 2.4 kgs per person in Australia.

‘The alternative to lightweight single use plastic bags is to bring your own bag to the shops, an easy and practical solution to reduce plastic pollution.’

‘We do however think the big retailers should go beyond their plan to introduce thicker 55 micron bags at a 15 cents charge and urge that they replace this with fully proven reusable bag so the whole community adapts and use only genuinely reusable bags.’

The Boomerang Alliance recommends that Woolworths, Coles and other retailers see this ban as the first step in a movement to reduce the use of single use, disposable plastics. A review into plastic packaging of fresh food

should be instigated with the aim of removing or replacing all unnecessary packaging.