

**Submission
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**INQUIRY INTO WASTE AVOIDANCE AND RESOURCE
RECOVERY AMENDMENT (PLASTICS REDUCTION)
BILL 2021**

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INQUIRY INTO THE WASTE AVOIDANCE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY AMENDMENT (PLASTICS REDUCTION) BILL 2021

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Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the inquiry into the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment (Plastics Reduction) Bill 2021.

I was astounded to learn that only 9% of the 8 billion tonnes of plastic that has been produced has been recycled and that half of this plastic has been produced in the past 15 years.

There is no denying that plastic is harmful to our environment and particularly to oceans and sealife and it is horrendous to see the footage of marine life and birds that have been killed or have died a slow and painful death from either consuming plastic or having their body entangled in it. No animal is safe from plastic and as we are discovering the human animal is being impacted too with microbeads.

Our use of plastic and in most cases our one-time single use of plastic is literally killing our oceans and destroying our environment and our planet as it spreads throughout the oceans. I totally support this Bill with its intended aim to address this environmental crisis.

It has been predicted that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish if we continue on our current path. And the production and landfill of plastic is also contributing to the climate crisis which we are already seeing the consequences of here in NSW with the Black Summer Fires. Here in Australia we produce 3 million tonnes of plastic every year and we in NSW must take a step forward and share in the responsibility of mitigating the damaging and harmful effects of plastic. The Bill is a very good start to recognising this critical threat to our environment.

The Bill must include an education component as this is such a huge part of addressing the problem of our overuse of plastic and lack of consideration for where it ends up. And I would expect the Government to be leading by example in their use of plastic and in sending the message out about how harmful plastic is to our environment.

I give my full support to the phasing out of single-use plastics, polystyrene packaging, products containing microbeads and other plastic products that are harmful to the environment.

I fully support the establishment of a Plastics Reduction Commission and also the requirement to meet specified plastics elimination targets.

As well as reducing the production of plastic the Government must ensure that plastic products are recycled and re-used and that there are appropriate incentives for both industry and individuals to do so.

I would also urge the committee to consider the other harmful pollutants that end up in our water catchments, underground water, oceans and in our environment generally. In particular the effluent and chemicals from the animal agriculture industry including the bodies of dead animals from cruel intensive industrial animal agriculture; pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and other chemicals; the spreading of the toxic poison 1080 which apart from being incredibly cruel is poisoning our environment; the chemicals from coal-seam gas

mining and other extractive industries; the effluent from mines not being rehabilitated; and sediment and erosion from harmful land-clearing and native forestry. Our precious natural resources and environment are being bombarded with a cumulative effect of contamination and destruction and these too all need to be addressed.

Of particular concern to me is that public money is still supporting and propping up these harmful and unsustainable industries. In regards to plastics public money should be going towards incentivising the creation and production of environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic and this most certainly does not include cutting down our native forests.

Water extraction from aquifers is also a big problem especially in northern NSW where I live. Most of this water which is crucial to the water table, for the environment and for the local community is going into single use plastic bottles or sold to Coca Cola to produce unhealthy drinks. This practice of plundering our precious water supply, especially when it accompanies an increase in the production of plastic needs to be banned across NSW.

The Boomerang Alliance is a wonderful non-profit and environmental conservation organisation which has an 11 point plan which I fully support to help reduce our production and use of plastic.

I urge the Committee to endorse and support the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment (Plastics Reduction) Bill 2021 to ensure the health and biodiversity of our natural world, not only here in NSW but it will have a much broader impact on migrating birds, our coastline and extending into the oceans contributing to the well being of our planet.

Susie Header