

Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Senate Inquiry into the threat of marine plastic pollution in Australia

Clean Ocean Foundation was founded in Victoria in 2000 by beachcombers, swimmers, fishermen, surfers and other lovers of the sea, we are an environmental charity focussed on issues related to ocean pollution.

A consistent refrain of our members is that the amount of plastic marine debris being washed up on Australian beaches is a major concern.

A major contributor is woefully inadequate regulatory environment that allows producers of items encased in plastic to take inadequate responsibility for the composition of the product they supply and no responsibility for the amount of harm to the environment.

Our members and others voluntarily attempt to clean up local areas. This includes activities at events such as our “One Hour Power Cleans” along the Bass Coast.

There are many initiatives that local community we would like to develop but believe that a general lack of resources prevents there being a coordinated and systemic approach to resolving this problem. For a more coordinated approach to be developed it only seems fair that those that create the problem should now contribute to the solution.

Recyclable plastic “deposit” of \$1

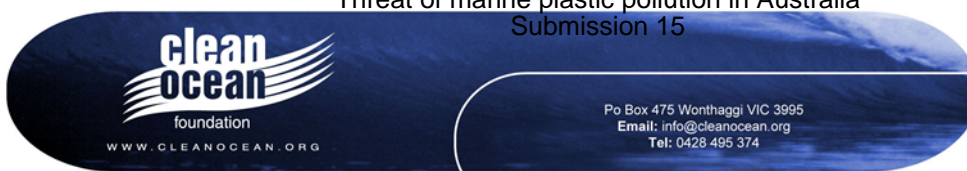
Plastic recycling systems advocated as an alternative to deposit schemes by the plastic and beverage lobby over many decades have patently failed to stop ocean pollution.

A clear strong price signal now has to be sent to the public to both emphasise the severity of the plastic ocean pollution and to provide stimulus to the market to provide an effective solution.

As such any container for beverages that contain plastic (including coffee cups) should have a mandatory \$1 deposit factored into its price. Concurrent with this is a ban on non-recyclable plastic beverage containers.

Clean Ocean Foundation also would like to see consumers be able to leave unwanted packaging material for goods at the store where the goods were purchased.

Drinking and drink bottle refill stations



National guidelines should be established to mandate the installation of water refill stations in all new developments and retrofit in existing municipalities. This approach consolidates and expands the highly successful initiative of Manly Beach area; where the council has provided 18 water refill stations for the community, free of charge, and this has stopped up to 80 tonnes of plastic waste being generated. (For more information see: <http://www.manly.nsw.gov.au/environment/climate-change-and-sustainability/portable-water-stations/>)

Equally as important is the fact that provision of water as beverage is also a recommended way to reduce the consumption of sugar sweetened drinks related to obesity (http://www.who.int/elena/bbc/ssbs_childhood_obesity/en/).

Green Army Resources to assist volunteers with Beach Clean Ups

A significant problem that is overwhelming volunteers is the unending task of collecting marine debris washed up on Australian beaches. Resources should be allocated to assure this issue is addressed.

Thank-you for considering our submission.

John Gemmill

CEO Clean Ocean Foundation

johng@cleanocean.org