

## Beach Patrol 3280-3284



15 December 2022

### Committee Secretary

Standing Committee on Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water  
P.O. Box 6021  
Canberra ACT 2600

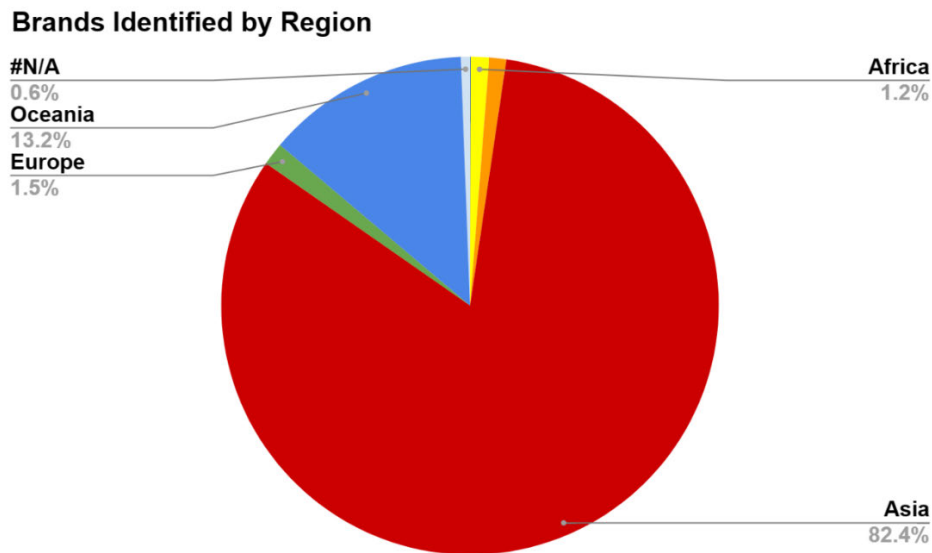
### Re: Inquiry into Plastic Pollution in Australia's Oceans and Waterways.

Dear Committee Secretariat,

Beach Patrol 3280-3284 wish to bring to the Committee's attention the issue of plastic marine pollution, specifically from international merchant ships dumping rubbish off our coastline.

We are a volunteer community group based in Southwest Victoria which is connected to our auspice organisation, Beach Patrol Australia. Our members conduct clean ups on beaches and estuaries. Clean ups can be conducted as group events or by individuals. Items collected on clean ups are recorded on the [Litter Stopper](#) app. As well as uploading litter data on Litter Stopper, Beach Patrol 3280-3284 also keeps detailed records on shipping litter collected in our region.

Figure 1: Chart showing brands identified by geographical region 19/07/2017-04/11/2022



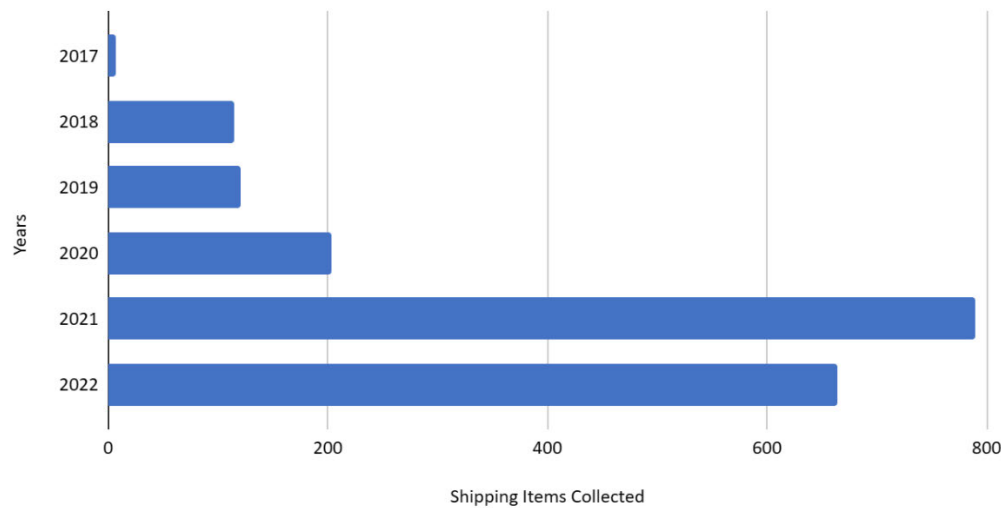
In fact, our data reveals over 82 percent of bottle brands identified are from Asia while only 13 percent identified as being available from the Oceania region, which includes Australia and New Zealand (see Figure 1).

This year we have collected shipping debris every week on 203 clean-up occasions with a total of 825 foreign branded items recorded. Examples of the debris that we believe originates from international ships include numerous brands of water bottles, food packaging, expandable EPE foam fresh fruit mesh sleeve nets, cleaning product packaging, coffee jars, and cigarette butt tins. Our data shows that foreign-labelled drink bottles and food packaging are more prevalent on our beaches than Australian-branded litter (see Figure 1).

Figure 2: Chart showing shipping related items collected between 19/07/2017-04/11/2022

### Shipping Related Items Collected

19/07/2017-04/11/2022



We have collated data on the frequency and type of shipping debris washing up, enlisting the support of fifty volunteers. We have kept records of our beach cleans since 2017 and noted a steep increase in the amount of shipping debris since the start of 2021 (see Figure 2).

We contracted an environmental consultant to independently verify our data. We have attached the report he has compiled (refer to attachment).

Our report and data clearly demonstrate that merchant shipping is contributing heavily to ocean pollution in our region.

Figure 3: Example of Bottles Overboard Facebook Group Bottle I.D.



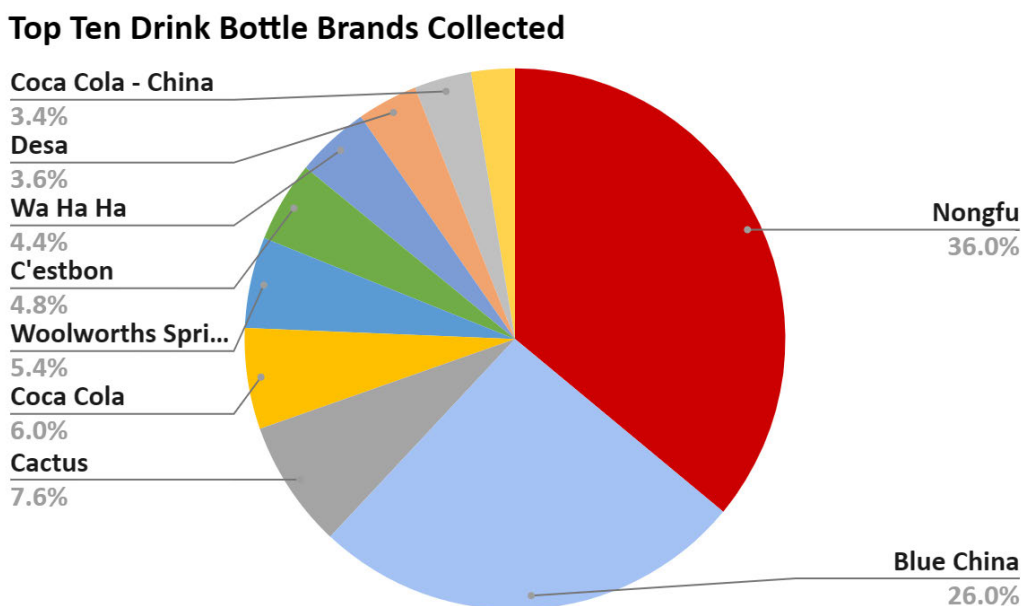
We have:

- Researched brands and created a foreign bottles I.D. catalogue (see Figure 3)
- Produced a [#bottlesoverboard video explainer](#)
- Established [#bottlesoverboard](#) Facebook link

We are extremely disappointed with the lack of adherence to MARPOL Annex V by ships traversing our coastline and would like the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA ) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to do more to address shipping pollution. We would like merchant ships to stop trashing our oceans, and shipping litter to stop polluting our beaches. From our recent meetings with AMSA, it is apparent that a better system of monitoring and disposal of shipping waste is needed from port authorities, state and federal government agencies and waste management services.

We appreciate that the Government has commissioned an inquiry into plastic pollution in Australia's oceans and waterways as part of Labor's Waste and Recycling Plan. Our concern, however, is that inputs into the ocean from sea- based activities are not being addressed. We believe any work on reducing plastic in the ocean needs to consider that a large proportion of marine debris ending up on our shores is from boats and ships, rather than stormwater or rivers. It is our experience that commercial fishing and shipping makes up for 80% of the plastic that we collect on our beaches. Our citizen science project Bottles Overboard has found that Chinese brands Nongfu and Master Kong (Blue China) make up over 60 percent of the top ten branded bottles (including Australian brands) collected off our beaches (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Top Ten Drink Bottle Brands Identified by Brand 19/07/2017-04/11/2022



We have also noted that our most recent data shows that nearly 68 percent of the bottles found are either new or medium new, often with brand labels still intact and stamped with recent production dates (see Figures, 5, 6 and 8). Many of the plastic bottles collected from our beaches have been crushed which is a common practice used to save space on ships (see Figure 7).



Figure 5: Example of bottle age recorded as new.



Nongfu - China

Master Kong-China

Aquacool -Vietnam

Coca Cola -Malaysia

Figure 6: Example of overseas bottle brand collected with a recent date stamp.

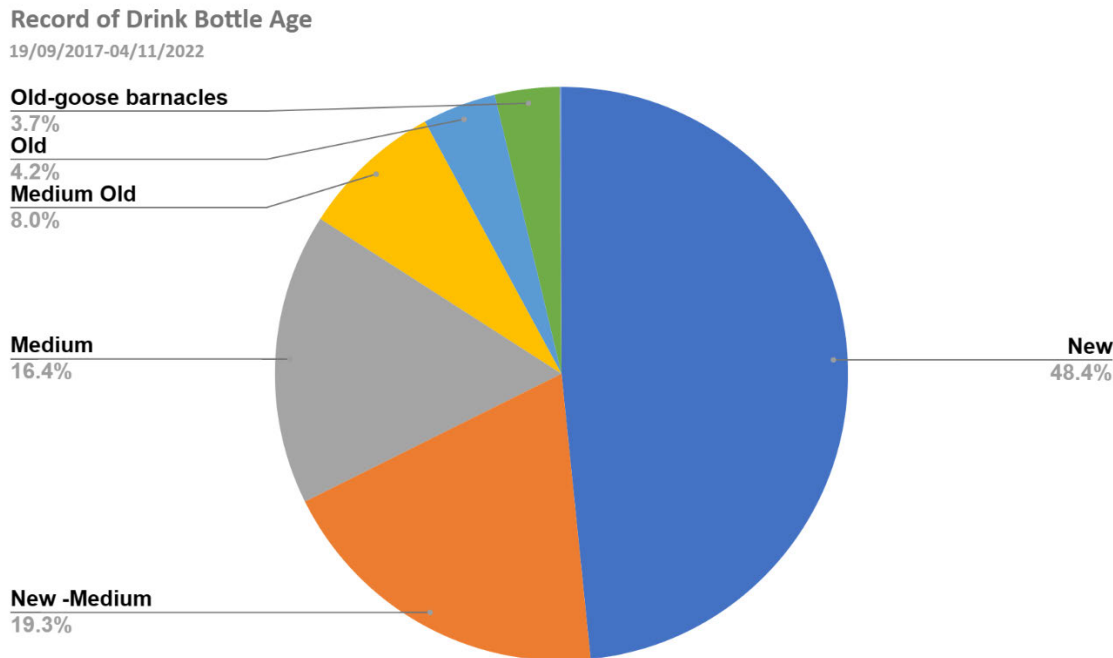


Brand American- Sri Lanka

Figure 7: Examples of crushed plastic bottles found on local beaches.



Figure 8: Chart showing record of age of drink bottles collected 19/07/2022-04/11/2022



We wish to highlight some clean-ups that show typically what we collect on our remote beaches.

- Terry's Beach (Nullawarre)  
<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.187260573539432&type=3>
- Discovery Bay (National Park)  
<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.548817186383895&type=3>

We understand that the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) has two projects on shipping waste which they are in partnership with AMSA as outlined in the Waste Policy Action Plan:

**3.20** Taking into account relevant international standards, establish a nationally consistent framework to enable ships to discharge clean segregated recyclable materials at Australian ports to divert this waste from landfill.

**5.03** Implement measures to reduce ship-sourced waste in accordance with the International Maritime Organisation's Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships

Waste management recycling facilities for merchant ships need to be implemented well before the time period of **Target 3: 80% average resource recovery rate from all waste streams following the waste hierarchy by 2030**. At the very least in line with **Target 5: Phase out problematic and unnecessary plastics by 2025**. The exponential growth of plastic inputs from illegal dumping of garbage at sea requires urgent action from the DCCEEW.

We read that in 2018 AMSA ran a pilot program to investigate the feasibility of recycling garbage from international ships at the Port of Hay Point and the Port of Brisbane. We would like to know the results of the pilot program and whether AMSA plans to make recycling available at ports on a more permanent basis.



We propose:

1. A round table meeting with relevant stakeholders, shipping companies, and state, and federal government policy makers to create actions to address the issue.
2. The development of a taskforce to implement a suite of tangible actions to address shipping debris.
3. The Australian Government's International and Domestic Plastic Policy Department to develop and implement actions to address shipping debris.
4. Shipping companies to commit to zero plastics disposed of at sea.
5. The Port of Portland to be a case study for what can be done to address shipping debris with a suite of trial actions including:
  - I. provision of recycling facilities for ships,
  - II. inclusion of a mandatory rubbish disposal fee,
  - III. cheaper rubbish disposal fee; and
  - IV. all ships to be boarded and checked for compliance.

We would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity for Beach Patrol 3280-3284 to make a submission to the inquiry regarding the illegal dumping of shipping litter in our region. We hope the Inquiry Committee will consider our suggestions for tackling this serious marine pollution issue.

Yours sincerely,

Bottles Overboard Campaign Co-Ordinators

### **Beach Patrol 3280-3284**

Beach Patrol Leaders/ Beach Patrol 3280-3284/ Bottles Overboard Project

