

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 123  
**Hearing:** Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1  
**Program:** Environment Standards Division (ESD)  
**Topic:** Helium balloons  
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**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Moore asked:**

Senator MOORE: That was one of the key aspects of the report. Did the issue of balloons come up at all? The use of balloons is a personal issue of mine in this space. In the same inquiry it came out very seriously—the issue of having some kind of regulation around those products. I am wondering whether you are aware of any movement in that space?

Mr McNee: Senator, you are talking about the release of, for example, helium balloons?

Senator MOORE: It is more than the helium balloons; it is actually the balloon product which then takes on the same kind of damaging impact in terms of waste, particularly in the marine environment. It does not seem to get the same profile.

Mr McNee: I would probably have to check in more detail, but I certainly think that, in at least the last few years, balloons have not featured as part of that conversation.

**Answer:**

The issue of debris from balloons entering the marine environment was discussed in the Environment and Communications References Committee report, *Toxic tide: the threat of marine plastic pollution in Australia*. Current discussions with state and territory governments related to plastics in the environment are focused on container deposit schemes, plastic bags, plastic microbeads and the Australian Packaging Covenant. The issue of balloons has not been raised in the context of those discussions.