

## Ministers on trial on waste

**Perth, 30 June:** Green groups and local government are demanding state and federal Environment Ministers deliver a national packaging plan to fix Australia’s growing waste mountain at a meeting in Perth tomorrow.

Outcomes of the meeting will show whether Ministers will act on the high level of community concern about waste or continue to support industry’s weak approach.

A new report released today by the Boomerang Alliance, the ‘Pathetic Package’, highlights that under the government-led National Packaging Covenant (NPC) Australia is rapidly earning a reputation as the world’s most wasteful society.

In comparing Australian data against the annual review of 12 EU nations’ packaging waste performance undertaken by Assurre, it found that Australia:

- Throws away 90kg per person p.a. of new packaging, 9 times worse than Denmark (10kg) and 20% more than poorest EU performer, Spain.
- Recycles just 47% of packaging rubbish compared to the EU average of 63% and is worse than all 12 EU states at recovering rubbish.
- Is losing 1.8 million tonnes of valuable resources, which costs \$90 million per annum to landfill and another \$250 million in lost sales of recyclable materials.

“While European countries continue to increase their recycling, Australia is one of the worst rubbish generators in the world,” said Dave West, author of the report. “Ministers should realise that their decision on Friday will either make them part of the problem or part of the solution.”

Environment Victoria campaigner and Alliance spokesperson Jenny Henty said that while the majority of Ministers are trying hard to tackle the problem, a couple are not recognising the need to invest significant resources in additional programs to achieve higher recycling rates.

“By not underpinning NPC recycling targets with these resources, governments are setting themselves up for failure. Ministers cannot expect the community to put up with another five years of inaction on litter, polluted waterways and injured wildlife. The NPC should be fixed or ditched,” Ms Henty said.

Cr Genia McCaffery, President of the NSW Local Government Association, said councils should not be expected to bear the cost burden to run proposed away-from-home recycling programs.

“Local Government is doing all it can to reduce the impact of packaging waste on the environment, by subsidising costly kerbside recycling and diverting as much as possible from landfill. But without a strong policy framework to reduce the amount of packaging produced and guarantee industries take responsibility for their products, we won’t match European achievements,” Cr McCaffery said.

### **PUBLIC ACTION: Friday 1 July, Perth Sheraton Hotel**

Community groups will greet Ministers at a protest from 0800 at the Sheraton Hotel at 207 Adelaide Tce, Perth and be available for interviews.

**Further information:** Dave West 0404 093 718, Jenny Henty 0439 369 209 or Angela Greenwood 0408 211 914. For a full copy of the ‘Pathetic Package’ report see [http://www.boomerangalliance.org/000\\_files/42\\_July\\_EPHC\\_Report.pdf](http://www.boomerangalliance.org/000_files/42_July_EPHC_Report.pdf).

**The Boomerang Alliance (www.boomerangalliance.org):**

