

THE NATIONAL PACKAGING COVENANT IS RUBBISH

19 November 2004: State and Territory Government waste strategies are at risk of being destroyed by a redrafted, industry led National Packaging Covenant (NPC)*, key green groups warned today.

A new alliance of Australia’s leading environment groups has called on all State and Territory Governments to reject the NPC model at a meeting of the Environment Protection and Heritage Council in Melbourne on December 3. Ministers at this meeting are set to vote on a framework model for a second NPC drafted by the industry-dominated National Packaging Covenant Council (NPCC).

“States and Territories around Australia are moving ahead with positive waste avoidance and recovery strategies - initiatives like Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia’s ‘Zero Waste’; the ACT’s ‘No Waste by 2010’; and NSW’s ‘Waste Avoidance and Recovery’ goals,” said Jeff Angel, director of the Total Environment Centre and a spokesman for the Boomerang Alliance.

“In contrast, the industry dominated NPCC has tabled an ineffective and inadequate voluntary national scheme that would lock out real progress in tackling packaging waste for a further five years.”

In a letter sent to all State and Territory Environment Ministers and Premiers, the Alliance states: *“The proposed draft for a next-generation NPC ... has betrayed both the process and the positive role we sought to play as stakeholders. It demonstrates the determination of industry to push for a lowest common denominator approach that falls a long way short of the community’s expectations on waste.”*

Sitting behind this weak and ineffective model are the nation’s biggest packaging waste brand names – Coca Cola, Fosters and the major food, beverage and grocery brands, along with the supermarket chains that sell them – and a Federal coalition government happy to give industry a free ride on environment issues from climate change to waste.

“Every year hundreds of thousands of Australians make a huge effort on Clean Up Australia Day. Yet the beverage and packaging industry refuses to take responsibility to help effectively deal with Australia’s waste problem,” said Ian Kiernan AO, Chairman and Founder of Clean Up Australia.

“What we need from State and Territory Premiers and Environment Ministers is an extension of the start taken on dealing with supermarket plastic bags. It won’t make sense to crack down on plastic bags and then go soft on the vast stream of packaging waste that consumers carry in them as they leave the store!” said Kiernan.

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*See attached critique of the NPC

The Boomerang Alliance Members:

