

Friday, 3 December 2004

Ministers avert waste crisis

Australia is a step closer to zero waste after environment ministers today cracked down on industry in a bid to stop the scourge of rubbish.

An alliance of green groups applauded State and Federal environment ministers who, at a meeting in Melbourne, agreed to set targets to reduce waste from packaging.

The Boomerang Alliance said the agreement was a welcome first step in ending the waste crisis.

“For too long the community has been cleaning up, picking up and paying for damage from packaging that clogs our waterways and litters our parks, beaches and roadsides. It’s well overdue that governments make those responsible for packaging waste work with us in dealing with the problem,” said Ian Kiernan AO, Chairman, Clean Up Australia.

ACF Sustainability Campaigner Suzie Brown said: “We are pleased to see that State and Federal environment ministers have shown leadership and supported the need to set high targets.”

Environment Victoria Zero Waste Campaign Director Jenny Henty said a Newspoll survey released today showed 91% of respondents thought governments should make those responsible for packaging waste deal with the mess.

“Consumers are faced with an ever-growing avalanche of waste and today’s agreement ensures industry will be held to account. Ministers Debus and Thwaites are to be commended,” said Ms Henty.

Total Environment Centre Campaigner Jane Castle welcomed the news that the ineffective National Packaging Covenant (NPC) will be boosted with targets.

“We welcome the recognition by State and Federal ministers that targets are required. These must be ambitious and address all materials individually,” said Ms Castle.

The Boomerang Alliance said the next step must be for the NPC Council and industry members to negotiate with green groups and local government.

“What we need are practical mechanisms such as landfill bans, deposits, refillables and advanced disposal fees, to tackle packaging waste. Targets will be meaningless if there are no programs in place to reach them,” said Ms Castle.

The Boomerang Alliance is a coalition of major environment groups committed to eliminating packaging waste.

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NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NSW Inc.



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