

Policy Proposal – Immediate ban of microbeads

Microbead Free Waters Bill 2016

Recommendation: That Tasmania Labor call for the government to develop policy immediately banning the sale, importation and manufacturing of microbeads in Tasmania. While the Commonwealth government is tackling the issue it is important for states to take action, and given the 2 year gap before enforcement, there exists the opportunity for Tasmania to lead the way and to cement our national and international image as green and clean.

Background:

- Approx. 350,000 beads per average bottle of face scrub;
- Middle Harbour scientists found 60-100 bead debris in 100ml of water sediment;
- Greg Hunt has initiated a voluntary phase out to end July 1st, 2018. If there has been no effective action taken by 2017 this will be brought forward;
- Woolworths, Coles and Aldi have ceased using them in their own products, which is similar to the companies Unilever, L'Oreal, Reikitt Benckiser, Johnson and Johnson, The Body Shop, Ella Bache and Clarins, Beiersdorf has asserted that they will find an alternative;
- Legislation passed in the US banning plastic microbeads beginning January 1st, 2018 and banning the manufacturing of products containing microbeads from July 1st, 2017;

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- Microbeads cannot be filtered using conventional waste and water treatment systems and are damaging marine ecosystems (and are potentially filtering up to humans);
- The Australian Senate has encouraged the government to “Ban the importation and production of personal care products containing microbeads” (*Toxic tide: the threat of marine plastic*, 20 April 2016);
- The World Economics Forum in January released alarming statistics about the prevalence of plastics in the world’s oceans. “Each year, at least 8m tonnes of plastics leak into the ocean – which is equivalent to dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean every minute. If no action is taken, this is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050”
- Natural progression after Tasmania’s ban on one-use plastic bags.

Attached is a proposed very simple bill that could be tabled immediately. This proposal has been discussed at and supported by PLP.

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