

21 September 2019

To: Environment and Communications Legislation Committee

From: Carrie Waring

Re: Personal submission to Inquiry for the Product Stewardship Amendment (Packaging and Plastics) Bill 2019

Dear Committee,

I applaud legislation introduced by Senator Whish-Wilson to help address plastic packaging and pollution. The costs of plastic packaging have not been borne by those who are manufacturing, distributing and using it. The non-biodegradable characteristic of plastic means society and nature are bearing the long-term brunt, through land and marine pollution, for short term convenience and profit. There are few current market based incentives for manufacturers to 'do the right thing' and little momentum to innovate technologically better solutions and/or adopt biodegradable alternatives.

I applaud efforts to:

- 1) Reduce the use of plastics packaging in multiple forms
- 2) Ban certain types of plastics
- 3) Put the lifecycle cost of plastic packaging on those who are manufacturing, distributing and using it

I also encourage the government to create the right incentives for companies to find and use alternatives which do not leave the community and the natural environment to bear the long-term brunt of its disposal. If the true costs of plastic are passed to the manufacturers and consumers, then finding and using alternatives would be much more attractive to everyone.

Ultimately, the lifecycle cost of plastic packaging should be extended to all forms of packaging used in the everyday products sold in supermarkets. Improvements could come in the form of truly biodegradable alternative packaging and higher rates of recycled materials.

Finally, I bear firsthand witness to the scourge that is plastic pollution in our ocean and our iconic Sydney (and wider) beaches. The photos below show what I pull out of the ocean on daily swims, particularly when a larger swell brings it from further afield. We are trashing our beautiful ocean and environment and the companies and consumers who manufacture and dispose of the plastic bear no regard for where it ends up.

The photos were all taken this week. Two days of plastic removed on a 20 minute swim. The underwater photos were taken with a GoPro at _____, one of Sydney's city beaches south of Bondi. The floating plastic is seen from below the water and the grouper is a local resident who has to live with it.

Thank you for your time.

Carrie Waring

