

Question on notice

My response to the question on notice from Senator Whish-Wilson - *which elements of both the outcomes of the summit and the National Waste Policy Action Plan from 2019 you strongly support and where you think there are still gaps in terms of how Australia needs to move forward?*

The National Waste Policy applies principles of a circular economy to waste management, the first principle of which is waste avoidance. The Plastic Free Foundation strongly supports the circular economy as the foundation of the National Waste Policy. In our view however there is a fundamental gap between the principles of a circular economy and waste avoidance and the actions that are being taken and the work that is being funded – the **reduce** message at the top of the waste hierarchy is not being prioritised in terms of action and funding, the focus of which is recycling and cleanup efforts.

The \$190 million Recycling Modernisation Fund and \$167 million Australian Recycling Investment Plan (including \$16 million program for the Pacific Ocean Litter Project; and over \$11 million for 'community campaigns to reduce waste, improve recycling and clean up beaches and waterways') are both examples of this focus on 'end of pipe solutions'.

An outcome of the National Plastics Summit was the preparation of a National Plastics Plan, the goal of which will be to increase recycling rates and reduce plastics pollution. In considering the Government's National Waste Policy Action Plan and specifically the second national target to "reduce total waste generated in Australia by 10% per person by 2030" there is a distinct absence of funding and effort in working with the community to promote waste avoidance and an opportunity here for a partnership between the Government and Plastic Free Foundation to see this target achieved. Our research shows Plastic Free July participants reduce their waste by 5%, already achieving half the governments projected 10% target and we would be delighted to help move forward on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

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