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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday 16 September 2026

Industry, experts, community groups and Australian households unite: Ministers must fix broken regulations on Fri 18 September

Unlike 80 nations, the Australian Government does not require producers of products and packaging to be responsible for what they sell in Australia. Skyrocketing waste management costs are left to Australian families, councils and businesses. Environment Ministers must finally align Australia to cut costs unfairly imposed upon households.

Hundreds of experts and over 10,000 businesses, households, key industry and environment groups have united by signing letters for Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and state and territory Ministers of Environment to follow through on their promise to regulate producer responsibility for products and packaging, especially plastic packaging.

The Boomerang Alliance, Australian Industry Group, Australian Furniture Association and Municipal Association of Victoria are just some of the peak groups that have united with experts, community groups and households representatives calling for clear direction from the national Environment Ministers who meet again on **Friday 18 September**.

The necessity and benefits of regulated producer responsibility are now overwhelming, particularly for regional communities and Australian producers. Over 80 nations have regulations that ensure importers and local producers contribute fairly toward the cost of their products and packaging, including beyond point of sale. But Australia remains an outlier and tardy. All Australians pay hidden taxes due to this lack of Producer Responsibility regulation via higher council rates and taxes that have to cover landfills, cleanup of dumping and litter, as well as excessive waste, lower recycling, high insurance, transport and growing dependence on imports.

Most of Australia's trading partners and competing nations adopted regulations for producer responsibility 20-40 years ago. From Brazil to South Africa, Italy and Canada, most countries balance their budgets, supply chains and roles for stronger economies and better services.

They have regulated so that producers can no longer shirk their responsibility for the design, recyclability and recycling of their products or packaging. Whereas in Australia it is voluntary, and Australian producers are undermined by importers. This weakness means crucial recyclers like RPA in South Australia announced liquidation in early September, another mattress recycler in Queensland hit the wall in August and more are pending closure. Fair competition rules are required in Australia.

"We have been overwhelmed by the consistent call for regulations from all parties across Australia, from reputable national trade and industry associations, to outstanding experts

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and businesses, and mums and dads” said Helen Millicer, CEO of One Planet Consulting and author of a new report comparing Australia with nations around the world.

“There is a real movement here with consistent concern. Producer responsibility is an essential regulatory and financial policy tool used extensively overseas and long required in Australia. Australians deserve the same, less wasteful products and packaging. The longer we delay, the longer we continue to unfairly burden households with costs and responsibilities they cannot control.”

“Australians have said it loud and clear. They want the companies that put packaging on the market to improve and pay for cleaning it up, not councils, not ratepayers, not the environment” said Jeff Angel, Director of Boomerang Alliance. “We have talked about producer responsibility for a decade while plastic keeps piling up in landfill, washing into our rivers and oceans. Enough talk. It is time to legislate a scheme with real teeth. Inaction also harms people’s health. A new YouGov poll published this week shows 78% of Australians are concerned about the impact of plastic pollution and microplastics on their health.”

Signatories to the Letter to PM Albanese are asking for these sensible announcements at EMM on 18 September:

1. **Use existing powers:** Governments can use the existing RaWR Act or state acts to regulate for producer responsibility for priority products like tyres, mattresses, solar PV and packaging.
2. **Strengthen national governance:** Designate the National EPA as the national regulator for producer responsibility schemes and producer compliance for one consistent system.
3. **Progress national implementation:** via the National Intergovernmental Agreement delegate and unify, thereby cutting fragmentation, duplication and costs across states-territories for national schemes to come into effect from mid-2027.
4. **Commit to implementation:** Announce intent to use impact statements and tenders in next 3-6months to establish national schemes.
5. **Adopt internationally proven models:** across the world best results and lowest costs are obtained from Not-For-Profit industry-led producer responsibility organisations. Commit to these as the model that evolve, collaborate and implement eco-modulated fees for public benefit.
6. **Urgent support to grow or lose priority sectors:** Key sectors have responded to government incentives and waited 6-13 years for promised regulation. Bridging finance is required until regulations come into effect to stop further REDcycle 2.0-type closures of schemes, supply chains and businesses and betray public trust.
7. **Strategic Roadmap:** Form a 6-24 month regulatory roadmap to come into effect by 2028 so all levels of government, businesses and communities can plan and prepare.
8. **Provide long term certainty:** Producers, Australian governments and businesses have already co-invested hundreds of millions. Even more is at risk if Australia’s broken, voluntary system is not fixed with mandatory, equitable producer responsibility regulations.

Australia can forge a better, stronger, more efficient future with better products and packaging – but only if regulations and these above points are adopted.

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About Helen Millicer

Helen Millicer is CEO of One Planet Consulting and a leading Australian sustainability and circular economy expert. She is author of groundbreaking report: *The Future of Producer Responsibility in Australia: International Solutions that will Fix a Broken System*, July 2026. To read the full report, [www.helenmillicer.com/Media/EPR Report](http://www.helenmillicer.com/Media/EPR%20Report)

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About Boomerang Alliance

Established in 2003, the alliance is Australia's leading circular economy NGO focussed on eliminating waste and plastic pollution at the source. The Alliance represents 56 local, state and national NGOs and their supporters. It is currently seeking national reform of packaging and reductions in plastic pollution to protect the environment, health and create a circular economy.

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