



6th June 2025

Senator the Hon Murray Watt

Minister for the Environment and Water
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: minister.watt@dcceew.gov.au

CC: The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, Hon Andrew Powell MP, Hon Dr Susan Close MP, Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP, The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP, Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC, Ms Suzanne Orr MLA, Hon Joshua Burgoyne MLA

RE: Banning cigarette filters – a problematic, single-use plastic

Dear Ministers,

No More Butts calls on the Environment Ministers of Australia to take decisive action on Australia's most littered item and hold a public consultation to consider a ban on the sale of filtered cigarettes in Australia by 2030.

As recently surfaced in a report by the CSIRO¹, cigarette filters are commonly the most littered item in Australia. The World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) recently adopted Article 18², urging member states to take action on the environmental impacts of tobacco, including considering policy measures on cigarette filters. The WHO has previously called for a ban on cigarette filters³. A report from the Belgian Superior Health Council⁴ has supported this position.

In Australia, a Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) submission⁵ in November 2024 concluded that there is a scientific foundation to warrant a ban on cigarette filters. There is no evidence that cigarette filters have any health benefit and instead they perpetuate a false sense of security for smokers.

Unknown to many smokers, substantially all cigarette filters sold are made of a plastic⁶ known as cellulose acetate. Cigarette filters are a problematic and avoidable plastic, which is known to cause harm to the environment, but not provide any benefit to human health.

With a motion⁷ approved by the South Australian Upper House in 2024 to take action (including discussing the issue at the next Environment Ministers Meeting); and an ongoing consultation⁸ in New South Wales, the Commonwealth should now lead a harmonised approach to addressing all tobacco waste. A phase out on cigarette filters should be considered, in line with the action set out in the March 2021 National Plastics Plan⁹ and the outcome indicated from the December 2025 EMM Communiqué¹⁰ to prepare a harmonised list of unnecessary plastic products. Action on this topic would be consistent with the Activity Focus¹¹ areas of HEPA for 2022-25.

Santa Cruz county (CA, USA) is the first known jurisdiction to announce a ban¹² on the sale of filtered cigarettes, coming into effect from 2027. We would encourage a bold action by the Commonwealth to be the first globally to take action. Australia should be encouraged to act, independent of the ongoing meetings of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution¹³ for a Global Plastics Treaty.

If any additional information is required, please don't hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,



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Further information

- No More Butts: [Submission to NSW Next Steps consultation](#)
- No More Butts: [Submission into Parliamentary Inquiry into Plastic Pollution in Australia's Oceans and Waterways](#)
- No More Butts: [UNEP Perspectives Issue 45](#)

¹ <https://www.csiro.au/en/news/all/news/2025/april/plastic-pollution-along-australian-coastlines-decreases-by-39-per-cent>
² <https://storage.googleapis.com/who-fctc-cop10-source/Decisions/fctc-cop-10-14-en.pdf>
³ <https://www.who.int/news/item/31-05-2022-who-raises-alarm-on-tobacco-industry-environmental-impact>
⁴ https://www.health.belgium.be/sites/default/files/uploads/fields/fpshealth_theme_file/20230511_shc_9726_cigarette_filters_vweb.pdf
⁵ <https://www.dea.org.au/submissions>
⁶ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34139503/>
⁷ <https://hansardsearch.parliament.sa.gov.au/daily/uh/2024-09-25/57>
⁸ https://yoursay.epa.nsw.gov.au/download_file/1308/677
⁹ <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/protection/waste/plastics-and-packaging/national-plastics-plan>
¹⁰ <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/emm-communique-10-dec-2024.pdf>
¹¹ <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-epa/who-epa-works-with/hepa>
¹² <https://tobaccoreporter.com/2024/10/11/california-santa-cruz-county-bans-sale-of-filtered-tobacco/>
¹³ <https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution>