Dd Mmmm 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 (remove names that aren’t applicable)

**CC:** Insert your Federal MP and/or your State MP

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

Dear Ministers,

I join No More Butts in calling 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 CSIRO[[1]](#endnote-2), cigarette filters are commonly the most littered item in Australia. The World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) recently adopted Article 18[[2]](#endnote-3), 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 filters[[3]](#endnote-4). A report from the Belgian Superior Health Council[[4]](#endnote-5) has supported this position.

In Australia, a Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) submission[[5]](#endnote-6) prepared for No More Butts 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 plastic[[6]](#endnote-7) 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 motion[[7]](#endnote-8) 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 consultation[[8]](#endnote-9) 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 Plan[[9]](#endnote-10) and the outcome indicated from the December 2025 EMM Communique[[10]](#endnote-11) to prepare a harmonised list of unnecessary plastic products. Action on this topic would be consistent with the Activity Focus[[11]](#endnote-12) areas of HEPA for 2022-25.

Santa Cruz county (CA, USA) is the first known jurisdiction to announce a ban[[12]](#endnote-13) on the sale of filtered cigarettes, coming into effect from 2027. I 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 Pollution[[13]](#endnote-14) for a Global Plastics Treaty.

In addition to the citations below, I have provided links to further information to support this position.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me on the details provided below.

Yours faithfully,

Name

Title (if relevant)

**Company (if relevant)**

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| **Email:**  | (Provided) | Insert email |
| **Phone:**  | (Provided) | Insert phone number |
| **Address:** | (Provided) | Insert physical address |

**Further information**

* No More Butts: [Submission to NSW Next Steps consultation](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/971a027b-4c58-496c-955f-ebd84dd6a1f4/downloads/NSW%20Next%20Steps%20Submission%20-%20No%20More%20Butts.pdf?ver=1715745416816)
* No More Butts: [Submission into Parliamentary Inquiry into Plastic Pollution in Australia’s Oceans and Waterways](https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=5069fe98-e23f-4712-8d5b-a7db3a445c11&subId=730050)
* No More Butts: [UNEP Perspectives Issue 45](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44764/Issue45_Plastic_Tobacco_Filters_2024-01-29_V2.pdf)
1. <https://www.csiro.au/en/news/all/news/2025/april/plastic-pollution-along-australian-coastlines-decreases-by-39-per-cent> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. <https://storage.googleapis.com/who-fctc-cop10-source/Decisions/fctc-cop-10-14-en.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.who.int/news/item/31-05-2022-who-raises-alarm-on-tobacco-industry-environmental-impact> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. <https://www.health.belgium.be/sites/default/files/uploads/fields/fpshealth_theme_file/20230511_shc_9726_cigarette_filters_vweb.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. <https://www.dea.org.au/submissions> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34139503/> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. <https://hansardsearch.parliament.sa.gov.au/daily/uh/2024-09-25/57> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. <https://yoursay.epa.nsw.gov.au/download_file/1308/677> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/protection/waste/plastics-and-packaging/national-plastics-plan> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/emm-communique-10-dec-2024.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
11. <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/about-epa/who-epa-works-with/hepa> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
12. <https://tobaccoreporter.com/2024/10/11/california-santa-cruz-county-bans-sale-of-filtered-tobacco/> [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
13. <https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution> [↑](#endnote-ref-14)