



25th November 2024

The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP

Minister for the Environment and Water
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: Minister.Plibersek@dceew.gov.au

CC: The Hon Penny Sharpe, Hon Andrew Powell, The Hon Dr Susan Close, The Hon. Madeleine Ogilvie, The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos, The Hon Reece Whitby, Ms Suzanne Orr, Hon Joshua Burgoyne

RE: Adding cigarette filters to the Agenda of the December Environment Ministers Meeting

Dear Ministers,

No More Butts, Boomerang Alliance and Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) requests the inclusion of **cigarette filters** (butts) as an agenda item for the next Environment Ministers' Meeting (EMM).

Generating the most littered item in Australia, cigarette filters are a problematic and avoidable plastic, causing harm to both the environment and human health.

They should be addressed with a national approach, in line with the action set out in the National Plastics Plan from March 2021.

Research released in November 2024 by DEA concludes 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. Previously, the WHO has called for a ban on cigarette filters and the Belgian Superior Health Council has endorsed this position.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) recently adopted Article 18, urging member states to take action on the environmental impacts of tobacco, including considering policy measures on cigarette filters.

Santa Cruz county is the first known jurisdiction to announce a ban 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.

With a recent Bill approved in the Upper House in South Australia and an ongoing consultation in NSW, the Commonwealth should now lead a harmonised approach to addressing tobacco waste.

Australia should be encouraged to act, independent of the ongoing negotiations for the Intergovernmental Negotiations for the Plastics Treaty.

Action on this topic would be considered to be consistent with the Activity Focus areas of HEPA for 2022-25.