



**MEDIA RELEASE  
5 DECEMBER, 2014**

## **Environment groups hold Manly memorial service for fallen comrade, call for ban on plastic bags**

Saddened by the tragic loss of a rare Risso's dolphin last week after ingesting a plastic shopping bag, one of only 35 recorded in NSW since 1929, this Sunday environment groups will construct a #banthebag cemetery at the main entrance to Manly Beach, to honour Risso the Dolphin and the hundreds of thousands of Australian marine organisms victimized every year by plastic waste.<sup>1</sup>

The cemetery, cordoned off by a chain of 128 plastic bags – the number used every second in Australia – will be dedicated to NSW Premier Baird, one of the last people to see the gravely ill dolphin the day before it was euthanized. Environment groups are calling on the NSW government to follow through on its bold waste reduction targets by announcing by the election its intention to ban plastic shopping bags.<sup>2</sup>

"Hundreds of regions, states and countries around the world, including 4 Australian states and territories, have banned single-use plastic bags," said Take 3 co-founder Tim Silverwood. "It's time for NSW to follow the global trend & do the same! If we continue to provide over 4 billion free shopping bags to consumers every year, thousands more marine creatures will suffer and die like Risso."

"Four states and territories have already taken action to eliminate free plastic bags and the evidence is a drastic reduction in litter," said Jeff Angel, National Convenor of the Boomerang Alliance. "Consumers adapt quickly, the environment is cleaner and marine life safer. New South Wales needs to step up - it could do even better and become the leader on removing the plastic scourge from our streets, parks and ocean. The plastic bags polluting the marine environment come from us and we have a responsibility to act by supporting proven government action."

Environment groups are also calling on retailers to practise Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for the plastic waste they create by phasing out or charging for plastic bags. Retail giant Woolworths has attracted criticism of its Aussie Animals program, a so-called marine education conservation program where it incentivises sales by offering trading cards of the very animals endangered by the large-scale distribution of free plastic bags.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-28/autopsy-finds-plastic-bag-in-dolphin-stomach/5926650>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/northern-beaches/nsw-premier-mike-baird-on-the-scene-of-a-dolphin-rescue-at-north-curl-curl-while-on-his-morning-run/story-fngr8hax-1227132730272>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.woolworthslimited.com.au/page/The\\_Newsroom/Press\\_Releases/Archives/2013/Hold\\_on\\_to\\_your\\_cards\\_-\\_Woolies\\_prints\\_more\\_Aussie\\_Animals\\_albums](http://www.woolworthslimited.com.au/page/The_Newsroom/Press_Releases/Archives/2013/Hold_on_to_your_cards_-_Woolies_prints_more_Aussie_Animals_albums)



**PLASTIC BAG FREE NSW**



"Disposable plastic bags are a clear and present danger to our wildlife," said Paul Sharp, founder of the Two Hands Project. "We have even recovered countless dead birds and sea turtles on Sydney's Northern Beaches with plastic bags in them. The big two supermarkets need to take the lead and help us protect our wildlife by voluntarily withdrawing disposable shopping bags and supporting a statewide ban.

Community groups are overwhelmed with the increase in litter and waste, particularly single-use plastic.

"Our volunteers have picked up tens of thousands of plastic bags on beaches across NSW, many with visible teeth marks," said Responsible Runners founder Justin Bonsey. "Along with container deposit legislation, banning plastic bags is the most effective way to clean up our communities and environment. We call on the Premier and Environment Minister give clean-up groups like ours reprieve from an endless stream of waste and litter."

**When:** 3pm, Sunday, 7 December, 2014

**Where:** Manly Ocean Care Day, Manly beachfront, Sydney

Further information: Tim Silverwood 0420668114 or Justin Bonsey 0451837466; [www.plasticbagfreensw.org](http://www.plasticbagfreensw.org)



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