

**From:** Inquiry into the Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Plastic Bags, Packaging and Microbeads) Bill 2016 eSubmission Form  
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Plastic Bags, Packaging and Microbeads) Bill 2016

Mr Ron Matthews

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**SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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**INQUIRY INTO THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AMENDMENT (BANNING PLASTIC BAGS, PACKAGING AND MICROBEADS) BILL 2016**

The Secretary  
Environment and Planning Committee  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

I understand there is a patch in the Pacific Ocean which has been aptly named "The Great Pacific Garbage Patch", which has its origins as a result of how the earth's sea currents travel. This area collects debris from the oceans of the world, and is about the size of Texas.

People who are aware of it, do not willingly toss plastics into our waterways. However, those very same people, who are environmentally conscious, may unknowingly be doing that exact thing on a microscopic level.

And this is the problem with Microbeads - Microbeads are just as detrimental to the ecosystem of our planet as is The Pacific Trash Vortex.

I am sure you have heard ad nauseam that Microbeads are advertised as the perfect way to exfoliate your skin, stave off acne and even keep your teeth clean, etc.

These tiny beads, which are found in body washes, toothpastes, facial scrubs and many other personal care products, are nothing more than tiny bits of plastic.

Microbeads are tiny - they are so small that they get washed right down the bathroom drain and, once discharged, there are no known methods to effectively remove microplastics or Microbeads from the environment.

Wastewater treatment plant filters are ineffective in stopping them - the filter openings are too big to catch them. Result is our waterways are becoming increasingly clogged with plastic Microbeads.

Now, Microbeads absorb toxins and are eaten by marine life! What makes matters worse is that once in the water, microbeads easily absorb endocrine-disrupting and cancer-causing chemicals like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Importantly, plastics may concentrate such toxins at levels 100,000 to 1 million times higher than the levels found in seawater. The beads, which resemble fish eggs, are eaten by many forms of marine life, including fish, seabirds and whales.

Australian and Chinese researchers have shown for the first time that chemical pollutants accumulated on the surface of microbeads can pass into the fish that eat them.

With fish being a staple in the Australian diet, the researchers say products with the tiny plastics should be immediately removed from sale.

"We know generally that if someone eats a fish, they risk eating any pollution that may be in the fish," said Bradley Clarke, lead investigator and environmental scientist at RMIT University.

This is an international scourge to our oceans, rather than being a follower to other countries and states who have banned the beads, let's get Australia moving and be one of the leaders in banning Microbeads.

Help protect our environment, keep our fish clean, edible and safe for Australians to consume.

Australia, It's time to act! Ban Microbeads

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File1:

File2:

File3: