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marine debris, plastics and microplastics

Executive Summary

Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide 0 0 1 roary Secretary' v Œ o [• Œ %} Œ š } v u Œ]
debris, plastics and microplastics.

Australia notes that marine debris is a global challenge that would benefit from regionally applied
solutions. Common global challenges include the increasing production and use of plastics worldwide,

- x Development and rollout of commercially viable treatment options to convert plastic waste to material or energy

x Innovations in recovery and treatment technologies to ensure a more sustainable plastic cycle.

Australia once again welcomes the focus on marine debris and appreciates the opportunity to provide input into this process.

Introduction

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Small plastic pieces can be ingested by wildlife, causing physical blockage, internal injuries and death by starvation.

Microplastics particles (<5mm) may carry chemical contaminants that pose an ecotoxicological risk. These particles can be transferred upwards through the marine food chain causing adverse effects and may serve as a global transport mechanism for accumulated contaminants such as persistent organic pollutants. Microplastic can result from breakdown of larger plastic pieces in the ocean while manufacture at that scale is also widespread (for example beads in cosmetics that enter the environment through various pathways).

8. The range of management approaches needed to address these global challenges includes research and monitoring, public outreach and education, preventing and reducing debris from land-based sources as well as addressing marine-based sources and removing accumulated marine debris from the coastal and marine environment.
9. Differences in the capacity of countries to implement management approaches means that solutions identified at the global level would most effectively be implemented at the national and sub-national level, and at the regional level through partnerships and existing international and regional forums.
10. The actions and activities undertaken by Australia at national, regional and global levels to reduce the incidence and impact of marine debris, plastics and microplastics on the marine environment are outlined below.

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11. Australia is actively engaged in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. Australia, through the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) contributing scientific expertise to the UNEP core study on strengthening the evidence base about microplastics through participation in the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP; <http://www.gesamp.org>). CSIRO is also leading a project on the identification, characterisation and management of marine debris and is also undertaking research in Australia to help better understand marine debris type, occurrence and source, as well as wildlife impacts.
12. Australia supports technical cooperation initiatives in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

solutions and raise awareness of Australian legislation and MARPOL requirements related to marine debris.

13. Australia ratified the Noumea Convention in 1989. The Convention relates to the protection, development and management of the marine and coastal environments in the South Pacific region and obliges Parties to endeavour to take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution from any source.
14. Australia is a member of the joint International Maritime Organisation/Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Related Matters, which looks at the significant contribution IUU fishing makes to the volume of lost and discarded fishing gear. The Australian Government, fishing industry and non-government organisations are working in partnership to reduce ghost nets in the area of the Northern Prawn Fishery, in particular in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Ghost nets sighted by fishery operators are reported to World Animal Protection and removed by the operator, Australian Border Force or the Australian Fisheries Management Authority.
15. Australia works through the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTICFF) to improve fishing practices (including net retrieval and waste management) in Arafura Sea communities. Australia, Indonesia and Timor-Leste are working together to support the Strategic Action programme over the next five years, which includes reducing land-based and marine sources of pollution.
16. Australia is helping reduce the impact of marine debris on migratory species through the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Animals (CMS) by sponsoring a resolution on marine debris (Resolution 10.4) and providing \$AU75,000 to support its implementation (Resolution 11.30 refers).
17. The Australian Government also contributed its expertise to two IWC workshops assessing the impact of marine debris on cetaceans.
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20. The Australian Government has committed to a range of activities