



Pacific Seabird Group

Dedicated to the Study and Conservation of Pacific Seabirds and their Environment

To: The Honorable Mr. Frydenberg
Minister for the Environment and Energy

July 25, 2018

Re: Balloon Ban:

We strongly support the call for an Australia-wide ban on the release of balloons and the use of helium to inflate balloons. We call on all States and Territories to change their littering act to specify releasing balloons as an offense. Too many seabirds and other marine animals have died after ingesting or becoming entangled in balloons that floated out to the ocean, unnecessary deaths for a trivial experience.

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) is an international, non-profit organization that was founded in 1972 to promote knowledge, study, and conservation of Pacific seabirds with a membership drawn from the entire Pacific basin, including Canada, Mexico, Japan, China, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Among PSG's members are biologists who have research interests in Pacific seabirds, government officials who manage seabird refuges and populations, and individuals who are interested in marine conservation. PSG members serve as scientific experts and conservation leaders within their local communities. Collectively, the Group's members have a great deal of knowledge and experience with respect to seabird conservation and the threat posed from plastic pollution.

Marine plastic pollution is a major crisis to a wide range of marine wildlife including seabirds. Balloons and balloon fragments that enter the ocean can be mistaken for jellyfish and other prey and eaten by seabirds along other wildlife (fish, marine turtles, etc). When swallowed, there is a real danger of balloon remnants blocking gastro-intestinal tracts. The string attached to a balloon can also strangle or entrap animals. Albatross are especially vulnerable as they often eat jellyfish.

Several [examples](#) of seabird balloon ingestion and mortality have been reported online in recent years.

Please ban the use of helium balloons and be a leader in marine conservation.

Thank you for your consideration.

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