

## Position Statement on oxo-biodegradable plastics

June 2020

### **Boomerang Alliance supports the banning of oxo-biodegradable plastic packaging products.**

Oxo-biodegradable (also called oxo-degradable) is a term used to describe a plastic product, manufactured from fossil fuels. Oxo-biodegradable materials can be used in such products as plastic bags or plastic straws. They are often branded with some form of eco-labelling, suggesting that they are biodegradable or environmentally friendly.

Oxo-biodegradable products contain a catalyst that promotes limited product degradation, under certain conditions with little evidence they will completely biodegrade. They will not meet the Australian Composting Standard.

In a recent global statement (2018), endorsed by over 150 major corporations and organisations, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation called for the banning of all oxo-degradable products, adding:

‘The available evidence overwhelmingly suggests oxo-degradable plastics do not achieve what their producers claim and instead contribute to microplastic pollution. In addition, these materials are not suited for effective long-term reuse, recycling at scale or composting, meaning they cannot be part of a circular economy.’<sup>1</sup>

The Boomerang Alliance is concerned that these products are being promoted as being an ‘environmentally-friendly’ alternative to single use plastics. The product is extensively used as misleading ‘greenwash.’

These products are not a compostable plastic, but a conventional plastic mixed with an additive to make them partially biodegrade. These products fragment into smaller pieces without breaking down to a molecular level. The resulting microplastic is left in landfill or the environment indefinitely.

The Commonwealth Government, State and Territory Governments and the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) have targets to make all packaging reusable, compostable or recyclable by 2025. Oxo-biodegradable products will not meet any of those requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.european-bioplastics.org/over-150-organisations-back-call-to-ban-oxo-degradable-plasticpackaging/>