

Media Statement

Microbeads and microplastics

Our industry places the highest value on the environmental safety of its products.

We are aware of emerging concerns regarding polyethylene microbeads which may be used in some personal care products such as facial scrubs. This is an issue which the industry is committed to working collaboratively on in order to resolve.

Accord is a willing participant in the NSW Microplastics Working Group established by NSW Environment Minister Rob Stokes.

This Working Group was foreshadowed by the minister in late August this year and had its first meeting on 13 November. Accord welcomes this policy process and the opportunity it provides to work with government officials and environmentalists to develop effective solutions for both microbeads and the broader issues related to other sources of microplastics entering the Australian marine environment.

The cosmetics industry in the USA has committed to a phase-out of polyethylene microbeads by the end of 2017. This end of 2017 phase-out deadline has been made law in certain US states, like Illinois. Given the size of the US market this deadline sets an important global precedent for action elsewhere.

The local industry is committed also to working towards this deadline and to an evidence-based policy process which addresses the most significant sources of microplastics in the Australian context.

Polyethylene microbeads from the facial scrubs people use in their bathrooms can only enter the environment via the sewer, so it is a concern that sewer overflows still appear to be contaminating Sydney Harbour.

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**Media contacts –
Craig Brock, Policy & Public Affairs Director – 0422 363 646 or 02 9281 2322**