

MEDIA STATEMENT

Outstanding industry progress on phase-out of solid plastic microbeads

Accord welcomes today the announcement by Federal Environment Ministers Frydenberg and Price that recognises the significant achievements by Australian industry in the voluntary phase out of solid plastic microbeads from relevant categories of products.

According to the Federal Ministers' joint Media Release, "*Industry has successfully risen to the challenge issued by Australia's environment ministers to voluntarily phase out the use of microbeads in cosmetic and personal care products*".

Today's Meeting of Environment Ministers (MEM) also confirmed that the "*voluntary phase-out of microbeads, which Ministers initiated in 2016, is on track*".

Coordinated by industry body Accord Australasia under the *BeadRecede* campaign, the voluntary initiative has a deadline of 1 July 2018 for the phase-out of solid plastic microbeads in rinse-off and exfoliating cosmetic, personal care and cleaning products.

Even though research around the globe has shown that the cosmetic and personal care industry's contribution to plastic marine litter is very minor, our industry took swift action to voluntarily remove microbeads from these rinse-off and exfoliating products.

"Two independently validated progress reports submitted by Accord have shown strong commitment to voluntary action across our industry in removal of microbeads," said Accord Executive Director Bronwyn Capanna.

"Additionally, an independently commissioned survey of products in the marketplace conducted in late-2017 confirmed the industry's significant progress," continued Ms Capanna.

"For example, this marketplace survey further established that none of the shampoos, conditioners, body washes and hand cleaners sampled contained solid plastic microbeads."

Although this survey also included leave-on products and other polymers that were not present in microbead form, 94 per cent of all products sampled did not contain microbeads or other non-soluble plastic polymers. Of the remaining 6 per cent, most were leave-on, not rinse-off, nor otherwise reasonably capable of entering the marine environment.

Products relevant to the voluntary phase out of microbeads such as facial scrubs – estimated as only 0.6 per cent – are expected to move through the supply chain well before the July 2018 deadline.

Our industry is doing its part – similar policy action on other, much more significant sources of microplastic in the marine environment should now be the focus.

Accord looks forward to another independent survey of microbeads in the marketplace to be conducted after the 1 July 2018 deadline to further validate the success of the voluntary phase-out.

27 April 2018

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