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28 September 2025

Ms. Heidi Tait info@tangaroablue.org
Director and CEO
Tangaroa Blue Foundation
PO Box 1235 Dunsborough, WA 6281

Dear Heidi Tait

The presence of Polypropylene (PP) contamination limits recyclability of HDPE milk bottles.

This Writer will write to anti-plastic interested parties, seeking the banning of high density polyethylene (HDPE) in all retail milk products sold in Australia.

Cardboard cartons have done the job, and will continue, but on a larger scale.

A lot of companies across Australia derive profits from manufacturing and/or supplying a variety of plastic products and will doubtless defend their income sources.

References:

- I. Philip Johnston's 1st letter to Heidi Tait dated 23 Sept 2025
- II. Heidi Tait's response email to Philip Johnston sent 24 Sept 2025 that included:
"At Tangaroa Blue, we share your concern about the environmental impact of single-use plastics and continue to advocate for source reduction as the most effective long-term solution. Your perspective reinforces the importance of continuing to push for systemic change that prevents plastic pollution before it enters the waste stream."
- III. Philip Johnston response email to Heidi Tait sent 24 Sept 2025
- IV. **Articles/reports re the dangers of plastics and the shortcomings associated with recycling in Australia and overseas**

Below are extracts from my recent letter to you dated 23 Sept 2025 (1st Attachment):

"Woolworths and Aldi package 1 litre milk in cardboard cartons at their Lane Cove retail stores. Coles at Lane Cove only sells milk in 1 litre plastic bottles that would take up to 100 times longer for the plastic to 'breakdown', than for a cardboard carton to decompose. Milk containers do not need to exceed 1.5 litres.

Sales of milk should be restricted in size to 1.5 litre cardboard cartons. No need for 2 litre and 3 litre plastic milk containers that take an eternity to decompose and are not cost-effective to recycle. Rather buy a few 1.5 litre cardboard milk containers if you have a family to feed"

If cardboard suppliers cannot produce a 1.5 litre cardboard carton to safeguard milk therein, then a 1.4 litre or 1.2 litre carton will suffice. Many thousands on 1 litre cardboard cartons of milk are sold daily.

Australia needs to evidence to other countries that *simple actions speak louder than copious written reports about the problems with the multitude of different plastics components.* .

Back in the 1970s milk was only sold in 600 ml glass bottles that were washed and refilled by milk suppliers.

<https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/523d2faa2162ef1200dcb691>

Below are extracts re associated recycling costs/problems with plastic milk containers from [**Plastic recycling is a minefield. Here's why it's so difficult and how we can make it easier**](#) - 26 Jul 2023 - ABC Environment reporter, [**Nick Kilvert**](#), enlisted comments from polymer chemist Professor Bronwyn Laycock:

Products branded with a number 2 are made from high density polyethylenes or HDPEs, **and include your cloudy milk bottles.**

"The problem is that you can't chemically recycle HDPEs very easily," says Professor Laycock, "because [the polymer is made of] very stable bonds of just carbon and hydrogen."

Which leaves mechanical recycling — melting and reshaping. But that comes with problems, says Professor Laycock.

"If you've got HDPE in a clean product stream (without any other plastic types in it), you can melt that fairly easily. **"But if you've got any sort of contamination, and that's common for polypropylene then it becomes much harder."**

The upshot is your milk bottle may well end up being "down-cycled" to an impure or compromised plastic and used for say, a park bench, decking, or even a rubbish bin.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip J Johnston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Philip J Johnston