

Monday 8 December 2003

KANGAROO ISLAND GOES PLASTIC BAG FREE

Kangaroo Island Council has joined Yankalilla Council in accepting the State Government's plastic bag challenge.

Minister for Environment and Conservation John Hill said the challenge was to get rid of plastic supermarket shopping bags within a council area and the response from local government has been excellent. Another 27 councils from all parts of South Australia have expressed interest in taking the State Government's plastic bag challenge and further information is being supplied to them.

"Kangaroo Island and Yankalilla are to be congratulated for their response to the challenge and demonstrating that entire communities can work together to remove this environmental scourge," the Minister said.

"With so many Australian Sealions and other marine creatures living on and around Kangaroo Island, it's commendable that the local community is playing a leading role in fighting to reduce the numbers of discarded plastic bags, which can harm or kill many marine creatures.

"Zero Waste SA is providing support to Kangaroo Island and Yankalilla councils in conjunction with Planet Ark and KESAB to assist these communities in going plastic checkout bag free. The assistance includes providing free calico or paper shopping bags to residents through Planet Ark and KESAB and educating the community about the danger to the environment of plastic bags.

"Thanks to an agreement with Sealink every tourist who arrives on Kangaroo Island by ferry will be given a calico shopping bag so that everyone on the island is aware of the bag free initiative and isn't inconvenienced during their trip.

"The education campaigns will particularly target schools and businesses (through local Chambers of Commerce) and will use material developed by Planet Ark for its "Plastic Bag Free Town" project and KESAB through its "Good Buy" Bag project.

"Having councils go plastic bag free will show everyone that we don't need to throw away seven billion plastic shopping bags each year. The efforts of Kangaroo Island and Yankalilla Councils, along with other groups and companies such as Semaphore Traders, Bunnings Hardware and Ray White Real Estate, will help to significantly reduce the numbers of bags we throw away.

"Yankalilla and Kangaroo Island Councils are planning to be plastic bag free in January. This will make Kangaroo Island the first island in the world to declare itself plastic bag free."