

**DO SOMETHING!**

Sunday 23 November 2014

## **Big multinationals to phase out plastic microbeads in personal care products**

**Positive move will help to reduce plastic pollution in Australian waterways**

The phase out of the tiny plastic beads used in facial scrubs and exfoliants is gathering pace. As concern grows about the environmental impact of plastic microbeads, the Australian arms of two multinational companies have confirmed that they're phasing them out.

**Unilever** will start their final phase out of plastic microbeads within two months. In a statement sent to DoSomething, **Unilever Australasia** said:

*"In Australia and around the world, Unilever is in the process of phasing micro-plastics out of our personal care products. We have been exploring suitable alternatives that will deliver the same performance without the need to use plastics. We will begin the next-stage of the phase out in January and expect to be complete by 2015."*

This week, DoSomething also received correspondence from **L'Oreal Australia** stating that:

*"The Group will have phased out all polyethylene microbeads from its scrubs by 2017."*

At the bottom of Sydney's Middle Harbour, scientists have found up to 60 fragments of microplastics per 100 milligrams of sediment. These are amongst the highest levels recorded. **These microplastics can be ingested by worms which in turn can be consumed by fish.**

The State of Illinois has banned the sale of plastic microbeads in personal care products. **DoSomething Founder Jon Dee and NSW Environment Minister Rob Stokes are both calling on personal care companies to phase out the use of plastic microbeads by the end of 2016.**

Mr Dee said other companies should follow Unilever's positive lead.

*"If a global organisation like Unilever is able to phase out microbeads from next January, then there's no reason why other companies shouldn't join them," he said.*

*"When Australians use products containing plastic microbeads, they can contaminate the marine environment," said Mr Dee. "These tiny pieces of plastic are going straight down the plughole and into our waterways. It's a problem that we need to fix."*

### **Want to see if a product contains microbeads?**

By downloading the free '**Beat The Microbead**' app, consumers can scan the barcode of products at home or in the shopping aisle to see if they contain plastic microbeads. The app is available free of charge for Apple, Android and Windows phones via **BeatTheMicrobead.org**.

**Jon Dee is available for interview on 0414 971 900**