

Submission on the ACT Government Phasing Out Single Use Plastics

City Services, Transport Canberra and City Services
Directorate



The Pro Environment Balloon Alliance

The Pro Environment Balloon Alliance (PEBA) is Australia's largest balloon industry association formed in July 2017 to be an advocacy body to promote positive changes in balloon industry practices, community education, corporate governance and to be a consultative body for legislative policy relating to balloons.

PEBA is committed to self-regulation and driving proactive, environmentally responsible change within the industry. PEBA members do NOT support, condone or facilitate the organised release of balloons.

PEBA's message is extending internationally through the fraternity of global connections. Our aim is to assist in making Australia the first continent in the world to ban the deliberate release of balloons. However this outcome cannot be achieved by industry alone.

The Balloon Industry

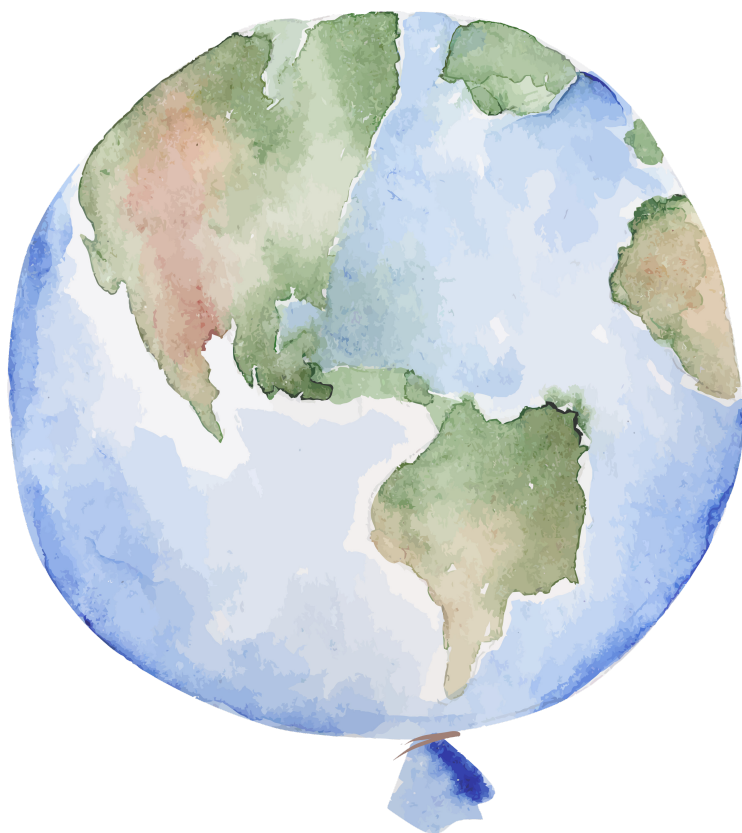
The industry is made up of small business owners including Balloon Artists, Twisters, Entertainers and Event Decorators who are valued members of Australia's Arts & Entertainment Industry. This profession employs thousands of people across Australia and includes retailers, suppliers and manufacturers.

Whether for decoration, celebration, sentiment, education or fun, balloons can capture attention and communicate across different cultures and languages.

Balloon Artists and Event Stylists use balloons as their medium of expression to create incredible works of art. Twisters and Entertainers bring joy to children all over the world using balloons.

Currently, there are campaigns calling for blanket bans on balloons. There are many cases where policies are being made without consultation with the Balloon Industry. We are very concerned about the impact this is having on the livelihoods of balloon professionals and thousands of jobs are on the line.





No Balloon Releases

PEBA has commitment from the following industry associations and manufacturers that they no longer support or condone balloon releases and are committed to the responsible use and disposal of balloons:

- The Balloon Council (TBC) - USA
- Balloon and Party Industry Alliance (BAPIA) - UK
- European Balloon & Party Council (EBPC) - EU
- Party Professionals Associations - WA, Australia
- BASA Victora - VIC, Australia
- Pioneer Balloon International - Manufacturer of Qualatex Balloons
- Sempertex S.A - Manufacturer of Sempertex Balloons
- Amscan - NSW, Australia
- Alpen Products - NSW, Australia
- Five Star Party Co. - NSW, Australia

Supporting Industry & Legislative Change

We appreciate the ACT Government's efforts to reduce litter. As members of the balloon industry we share concerns about the environmental impacts of marine debris. Although balloons form a very small fraction^{*} of overall marine debris and litter, PEBA is driving environmentally responsible change and is committed to reducing balloon litter and any potential effects on wildlife by eliminating the deliberate release of helium balloons.

We support fair and effective changes to legislation that will ban the deliberate release of helium balloons in order to prevent littering and reduce environmental impact.

We do not support the call to ban the sale and use of all balloons.

Balance is required to develop policies that are environmentally and economically responsible, are commensurate with the actual level of impact and do not unnecessarily deprive balloon artists and small business owners of their livelihoods.

^{*}NSW EPA estimates that balloons form 0.01% of the total litter and waste stream

[^]Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Clean Up estimates balloons formed approximately 0.7% of the total amount of marine debris collected worldwide over 25 years.

Be the Change

During discussions with environmental groups including Karen Joynes from No Balloon Release Australia, we have reached agreement that a nationally consistent approach on banning balloon releases is an important part of the solution. We are calling on all State & Territory Governments to include a ban on the deliberate release of balloons in amendments to their policies.

Members of the balloon industry in Australia and across the world share the concerns about the environmental impacts of litter and marine debris.

Although balloons form a small percentage of overall litter and waste, PEBA and members of the balloons industry, along with many different interest groups and environmental organisations are still very concerned that under the ACT Environment Protection Regulation 2005 it is still permissible to release less than 20 helium balloons into the environment.

Our members in the ACT are having problems effecting change whilst the current laws exist. We request that the allowance for 20 balloons to be released is changed to zero.

NSW currently has the same allowance of less than 20 balloons. We are requesting that the ACT and NSW come in line with QLD who have a zero release policy.

In early 2018, we co-signed a letter to all state and territory environment ministers, along with Zoo's Victoria and 19 other peak environment organisations. Together we submitted information on the need for a ban on the deliberate release of helium balloons.

We have met with the Federal Environment Department, New South Wales Office of the Environment and EPA and the Victorian EPA to discuss policies that are critical to the future of our industry.

Voluntary Reduction Strategies

Sustainable Product Design

One of PEBA's commitments to more sustainable practices is to promote the use of natural latex balloons which are not a petrochemical based plastic. They are a plant-based product, made from natural rubber harvested from rubber tree plantations which are a renewable resource.

Leading manufacturers harvest their latex from sustainable Rainforest Alliance Certified and Forest Stewardship Council Plantations.

The Rainforest Alliance are an international, non-profit organisation working to build strong forests, healthy agricultural landscapes, thriving communities and fight climate change.

Each year mature trees are tapped for rubber, old trees are harvested for timber, new trees are planted and carbon dioxide is consumed resulting in offsetting carbon emissions.

Although latex balloons are made from natural rubber, when balloons become litter they don't degrade sufficiently or quickly enough to prevent possible risk or harm to wildlife. Banning the deliberate release of helium balloons and promoting the responsible use and disposal is vital for effective environmentally responsible change.

Balloon Artists and Stylists are now using more air-filled, latex balloons in their installations which is also reducing the use of helium.



Reuse & Recycling

Although balloons form a very small fraction of the total volume of litter and waste, we continue to investigate reuse and recycling options for latex and plastic balloons to introduce more sustainable practices for the balloon industry.

Sempertex, one of the world's largest manufacturers of latex balloons recycles all of its waste. They developed a new line of products to reduce their ecological foot print. Duro Dog Toys are toys specially for dogs, made out of broken balloons and latex waste. These Duro products are durable and do not contain any toxic substances. All elements of the Duro Dog Toys are 100% organic and therefore also recyclable.

Other possible applications for recycling balloon material include use as a binder in children's playground surfacing and road base. However, after discussions with various companies, the challenge remains that although there are applications for reuse, the small amount of waste material our industry produces currently makes it economically nonviable.

We continue to investigate small scale, local industries that may be interested in our material and welcome suggestions or information from other industry or government agencies for possible solutions.



Procurement Procedures

By engaging Balloon Professionals, such as Twisters and Decorators who are members of PEBA, the public and private sectors can continue to support small local businesses. Employing Balloon Professionals and Artists who use latex balloons as their medium of expression, clients and customers are making an environmentally and economically responsible choice.

This also assists PEBA to spread the word about the responsible enjoyment of balloons helping to prevent environmental impacts associated with accidental or deliberate balloon releases.

The majority of work created by Balloon Artists consists of air-filled, natural latex balloons. If helium is used, professionals comply with industry standards by keeping balloons attached to weights and never releasing balloons into the air. Displays and installations can be fixed to indoor structures by Balloon Professionals who can remove and dispose of the balloons safely or who will advise venue staff on “Pin it and Bin it” methods to ensure controlled disposal to prevent litter after events.

Our Public Education & Awareness Pack provides flyers, posters and graphics to inform the public about safe balloon practices and responsible use and enjoyment of balloons.



Community Education & Behaviour Change Strategies

PEBA Australia has been working closely with the European Balloon and Party Council to develop an international approach to the responsible use and disposal of balloons based on the European Union's new waste legislation.

The campaign's focus is on educating the community about Safe Balloon Practices to help change behaviors both within and outside the industry.

Examples of the suite of materials are included in the following pages and include, posters, flyers, care cards and social media campaigns.

These will be used by PEBA and it's members including suppliers and manufacturers.



Litter Prevention Logos to be used in Australia, Europe and the US.

safe balloon practices

**Don't
Let it Go!**

Don't release helium balloons outdoors - tie each helium balloon individually to a weight.

**Pin It
&
Bin It!**

Always dispose of balloons responsibly, pop them and put them in the bin.

**Inflate
Safely!**

To remove the risk of injury, always use a balloon pump and NEVER inhale helium.

**Supervise
Children**

Uninflated or burst balloons can present a choking hazard - please supervise children under the age of 8.

**Be Latex
Allergy
Aware**

Balloons made of natural rubber latex may cause a reaction in those with latex allergies.



Learn more about the responsible use of balloons www.peba.com.au





Don't let it go!

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Balloons bring fun and enjoyment, helping us to celebrate life's special occasions.

As a member of the Pro Environment Balloon Alliance, we are committed to the responsible use and disposal of balloons.

As responsible balloon professionals and to protect our environment from unnecessary litter, we do not support balloon releases.

We encourage our customers and others to share our commitment by not releasing balloons into the environment.

We would love to help you find a good alternative to balloon releases which can be easily and responsibly disposed of after your event.

PIN IT & BIN IT!



Learn more about the responsible use of balloons www.peba.com.au



please dispose of balloons responsibly

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR BALLOONS.

REMEMBER, WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED WITH A BALLOON SNIP THE END OF THE BALLOON WITH SCISSORS OR POP WITH A PIN AND PLACE IN A SUITABLE BIN.

PIN IT & BIN IT



Learn more about the responsible use of balloons: www.peba.com.au



enjoy balloons responsibly

- ✓ **Don't Let it Go!**
Please don't release helium balloons outdoors, tie each helium balloon individually to a weight.
- ✓ **Pin it & Bin it!**
Always dispose of balloons responsibly, pop them and put them in the bin.
- ✓ **Inflate Safely!**
Always use a balloon pump and NEVER inhale helium.
- ✓ **Supervise Children Under 8**
Please supervise small children at all times.
- ✓ **Be Latex Allergy Aware**
Balloons made of natural rubber latex may cause a reaction in those with latex allergies.



Learn more about the responsible use of balloons: www.peba.com.au



The Joy of Balloons

Balloons are loved across the world. No matter the occasion, there's a balloon to match.

Whether for decoration, celebration, sentiment, education or fun, balloons can capture attention and communicate across different cultures and languages.

Balloon Artists and Event Stylists use balloons as their medium of expression to create incredible works of art. Twisters and Entertainers bring joy to children all over the world using balloons.

Simple and effective, balloons of all shades, shapes and sizes are used to add colour and bring joy to parties, weddings, celebrations and events by charities, companies and organisations every day.

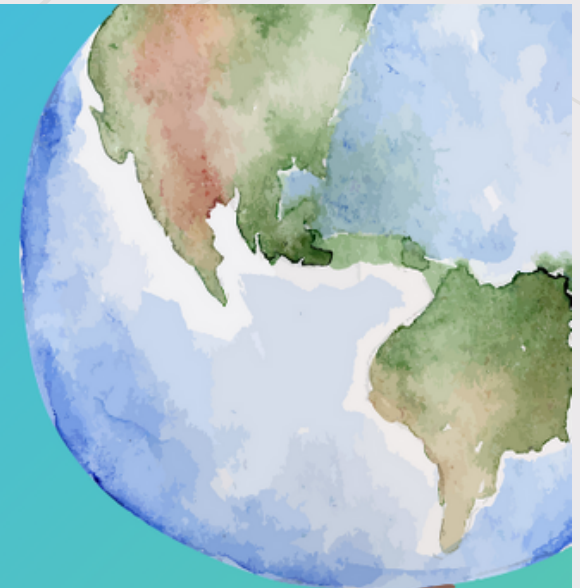


Balloons & The Environment

We are proud and active members of the Pro Environment Balloon Alliance (PEBA). We are committed to the responsible use and disposal of balloons.

Although statistically balloons make up a very small proportion of marine debris, the industry is committed to reducing any potential impact from balloon litter on marine life.

Please help us to promote the continued fun and responsible use of balloons and protect the environment by following our guidelines. Remember that any balloons released into the atmosphere can create unnecessary litter.



Latex Balloons

Did you know?

Latex balloons are not plastic, they are a plant-based product made from natural rubber harvested from rubber tree plantations which are a renewable resource.

Leading manufacturers source their latex from sustainable Rainforest Alliance Certified and Forest Stewardship Council Plantations. The Rainforest Alliance are an international, non-profit organisation working to build strong forests, healthy agricultural landscapes, thriving communities and fight climate change.

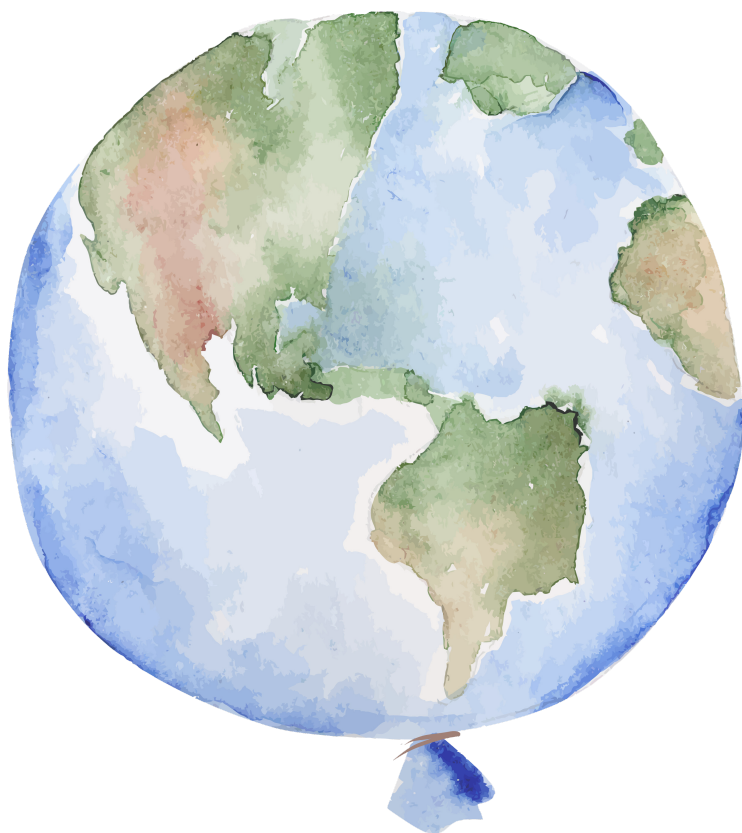
By choosing to use Balloon Professionals and Artists who use latex balloons, you are making an environmentally and economically responsible choice.

Helium

Did you know?

While balloons are perhaps the best known use of helium, they are actually a very small part of overall helium use. Balloon Gas is predominantly a by-product gathered during the production of medical and scientific grade helium. Instead of wasting this resource, it is collected and recycled. The sale of balloon gas offsets the cost of medical helium.





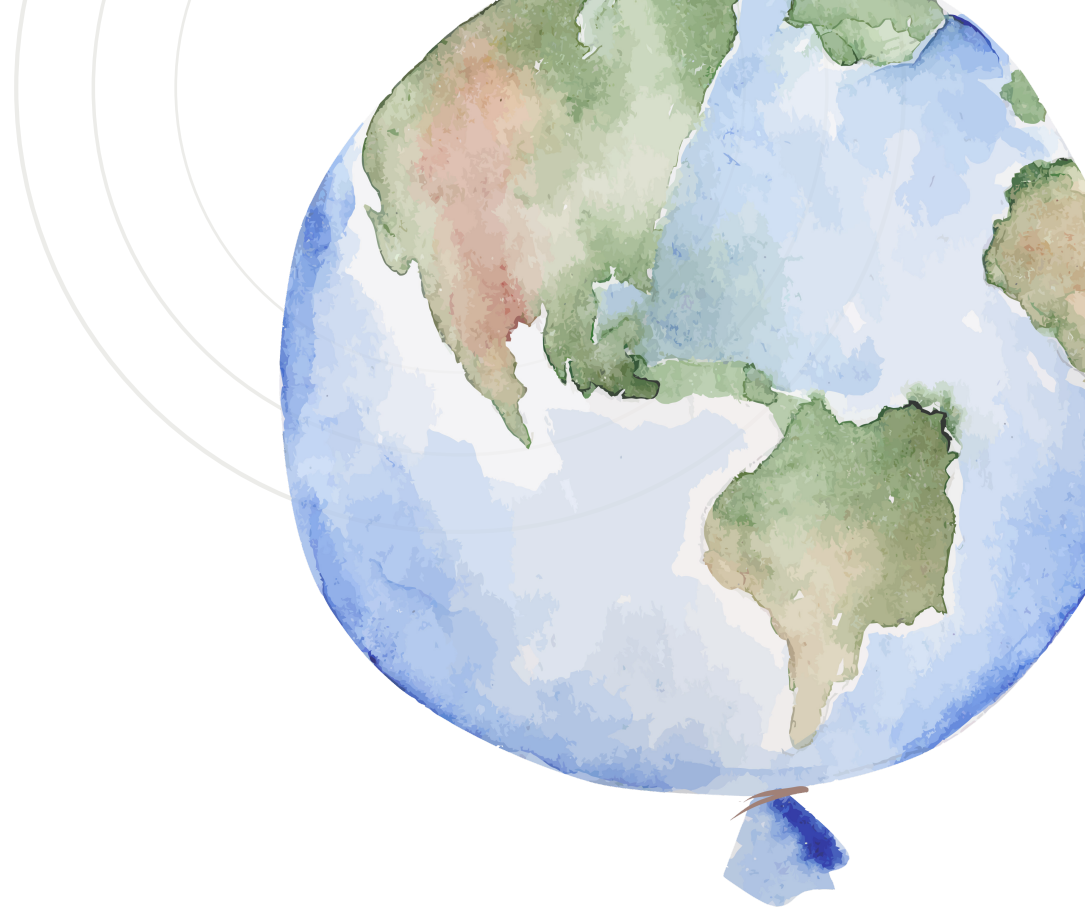
Our Future

The complexity of fragmented policy at local and state government levels and the momentum of changes is compromising our ability to effectively facilitate and manage positive change.

An amendment to remove the allowance for releasing less than 20 helium balloons from the Environment Protection Regulations would support the objectives of the Single Use Plastics Policy in preventing litter.

There is a sense of urgency as the balloon industry is losing jobs as a result of blanket balloon bans by local governments and corporate businesses.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how industry and government can work together to achieve an economically viable and environmentally responsible outcome.



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