



Helen Clark Joins Tidal Wave Of Support To Ban The Bag

Helen Clark, Dr Jane Goodall and actor Sam Neill are among the growing list asking the New Zealand Government for a total ban on single-use plastic bags.

This Tuesday 27th Feb at midday, the Jane Goodall Institute New Zealand and Greenpeace will be presenting [a letter](#) to the Minister of Conservation, Eugenie Sage, in front of the Parliament buildings, asking the New Zealand government for a regulatory ban on single-use plastic bags.

The letter is signed by former Prime Minister, Right Honourable Helen Clark, in her new position as Patron of JGINZ, and supported by companies, councils, non-governmental and community organisations, including Countdown, Bunnings, the Mayor of Wellington, SPCA, Forest and Bird, World Wildlife Fund, all supporting the government to Ban The Bag.

Helen Clark says, “the banning of single-use plastic bags from stores, communities, and the environment would be a big step in the right direction towards achieving the targets of sustainable development goals, a step where we are well behind many other countries which are enacting legislation”.

“I hope that the New Zealand Government, supported by corporations, community-based organisations and many New Zealanders, will ban the bag.”

Also signed up are: PURE tour 2018 - Plastics Use Resistance Education, the 5 Gyres Institute, Algalita Marine Research & Education, South Pacific and the Te Karu o Te Ika Voyaging Trust

Accompanying the letter is a [petition signed by 65,000 New Zealanders](#) calling on the Government to ban single-use plastic bags, showing the increasing concern about the plague of plastic in our oceans and environments, and the impact it is having.

Sam Neill, star of Jurassic Park and Hunt for the Wilderpeople, has got together with Greenpeace and made a [tongue in cheek film in praise of “the humble plastic bag”](#). The video has been viewed more than 700,000 times in the four days since launch.

New Zealand currently ranks among the worst in the world for creating urban waste and has fallen behind many countries in instituting a ban on single-use plastic bags.

Greenpeace Campaigner, Elena Di Palma, says New Zealand's plastic waste problem is quickly spiralling out of control.

Kiwis use around 1.6 billion bags per year which are used for an average of only 12 minutes, yet each one can take up to 1,000 years to degrade. They are choking our oceans and marine life.

"The aim is to ban all single-use plastic bags - we really need to get single use plastic out of our lives," Di Palma says.

"Plastic bottles, straws, plastic cutlery, all have a terrible impact on our environment and are deadly to the creatures we share the seas with."

Jane Goodall Institute New Zealand CEO & Co-Founder Dr Melanie Vivian says "There is an urgent need for all to take responsibility for the impacts we are having on our planet and its inhabitants. The consequences of our conveniences are now starkly obvious. To turn the impacts around behaviour change will need to come from us all, governments, businesses, communities and individuals. What we are seeing on the issue of single-use plastic bags that is so heartening is that so many are saying they are committed to making that change. As such we are ready to support the government to make legislative change to ban the bag. Hopefully the first step in many that we can take together to make positive differences for all".

The Jane Goodall Institute New Zealand, Greenpeace and other organisations are asking, and supporting, the Government to take decisive action.

Petition Delivery starts at 12pm at Parliament Steps on Tuesday the 27th of February.

Facts about single use plastic in New Zealand

- 87% of New Zealanders agree that we have too much plastics in our lives. Our petition has now gathered over 65,000 signatures calling for a ban on single-use plastic shopping bags, showing widespread support from the public for legislation on this issue.
- Scientists estimate that 8 million tonnes of plastic waste is ending up in the oceans each year.
- New Zealanders use 1.6 billion plastic bags per year, yet on average each bag is only used for just 12 minutes before it is thrown out.
- New Zealand's turtles are mistaking plastic bags floating in our oceans for jellyfish. A staggering 1 in 3 turtles found dead on New Zealand's beaches have swallowed plastic.

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Links:

Open Letter:

<https://greenpeace.box.com/s/om1fyscsj3jmdyao0rq5jyhgysx9wcy8>

Ban the Bag Petition: <https://act.greenpeace.org/page/11481/petition/1>

JGINZ statements - Rt. Hon. Helen Clark and Dr. Jane Goodall:

<http://www.janegoodall.org.nz/jgi-nz-campaigns/bye-bye-plastic-bags-2/>

Greenpeace videos for download:

<https://greenpeace.box.com/v/turtle-videos>