



## **Burnie Advocate**

**08/06/2011**

**Page: 15**

**Section: General News**

**Region: Burnie TAS Circulation: 23208**

**Type: Regional**

**Size: 51.00 sq.cms**

**Frequency: MTWTFS-**

### **Turtle torture**

MELBOURNE — Balloons, plastic bags, nylon rope and rubber thongs are providing a deadly diet for Australia's critically endangered sea turtle population, a new study shows. Research from Earthwatch program Turtles in Trouble has shown 36% of Australian sea turtles are affected by marine litter, as 18,000 pieces of plastic litter float on every square kilometre of the world's oceans. University of Queensland marine biologist Dr Kathy Townsend said the problem of marine waste had to be tackled. The plastic causes a gut impaction that leads to the contents of the animal's gut decomposing and the animal becoming positively buoyant, thus unable to dive and eat. "It can't get out of the way of predators, it can't get out of the way of boats," said Dr Townsend, who added the turtle may take months to gradually starve to death. Marine rubbish also affects Tasmania's fairy penguins.