

Question taken on notice –
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Public hearing – Inquiry into the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill
2017
Hearing 12 July 2017

Question:

Chair (Mr JP Kelly MP): Mr Woodall, in your submission you talked about the experience of other jurisdictions where the bans on plastic bags led to a subsequent increase in the use of bin liners. That led to an interesting discussion in my household on Sunday morning when I read that submission as to the purpose of bin liners and why we have them in our bins at all. It would seem to me that, from an economic perspective, if you are thinking about supply, the ban will affect supply, but the demand is about changing behaviour. Have those jurisdictions to your knowledge done anything to try to change consumers' behaviour in the way they use plastic?

Mr Woodall: We have not looked into any of the communication or education campaigns that they may have implemented. Can I take that one on notice?

Question taken on notice resolved by: Hayden Woodall
Answer date: 18/07/217

Answer:

In regards to your point on supply and demand – the imposed ban can very much influence demand as behavioural motivations are often influenced by what is banned or illegal. These are not mutually exclusive. Consider this hypothetical for example – *I will not do that anymore because I identify as someone who does the right thing, it is not in my nature to do otherwise.* In light of this, I do strongly support what you are putting forward Mr Chair. We need a multiple tool box approach to target attitudes and beliefs.

Many EPAs have pushed for the plastic bag ban and have implemented a range of communication and education campaigns to encourage a transition in consumer behaviours.

South Australia EPA:

- Information and tips on the EPA website for people to increase their awareness
- Workshops, expos and beach clean-up days to empower, educate and mobilise communities on the ground
- Encouraging plastic free schools and individuals through online information and challenges
- Social media page for the plastic bag ban and container refund scheme to increase awareness
- Infographics that make it easy to understand the complexity and importance of the issue and initiatives
- Testimonies / success stories are posted online to incentivise good performance as well as help disseminate information on how the legislative changes can benefit companies and individuals.

EPAs around Australia and the world have implemented similar strategies to influence behaviour. South Australia EPA is just one example. It is recommended that EPAs like SA, NSW, UK are consulted when designing appropriate communication, education and incentive schemes around plastic reduction in Queensland. Many of these EPAs have had significant results. Learning from comparable cases, their mistakes and successes will streamline this transition at a reduced cost.