

Agriculture and Environment Committee

From: Maree Ziirsen [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 8:10 AM
To: Agriculture and Environment Committee
Subject: Support for the ban on Plastic Bags and Container Refund Scheme

Categories: submission

Dear Committee Secretary

I would like to give my support to **The Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017**. This Bill shows a strong commitment by the Queensland Government to protect our environment and is a vitally important step to reduce the enormous amount of environmental litter, in the form of plastics, glass and aluminium, that threatens the health, appearance and functioning of our land and water ecosystems.

It is absolutely time to begin the phasing out of these products that drape trees, blow through the air and float in the water, pollute, entangle and kill wildlife.

Therefore, I am one hundred percent in favour of a statewide ban on single use lightweight plastic bags up to 35 microns, this should have happened years ago. I would also like to see this ban include heavier bags up to 70 microns and a gradually phasing out of all retail plastic shopping bags.

I live on Stradbroke Island and walk the beaches daily, plastic pollution and its impact on the marine environment is sadly, something I see every day. This ban really must include the outdoor release of helium filled balloons, this should be a littering offence as one single balloon landing in the water has the ability to cause suffering and death to aquatic life.

There are many other plastic items that should be addressed under this Bill, for example, the increasing trend of plastic packaging for fruit and vegetable grocery items should be reviewed and a plan implemented for the eventual phasing out of this very unnecessary and overused packaging.

While I am sure everyone is aware of the impact of plastic, further public education campaigns and awareness programs would help to reinforce the enormous benefits gained by reducing our dependence on plastic.

I also support the **Container Refund Scheme**, this recovery, refund and recycle initiative is a great way to encourage involvement by community members and organisations to increase recycling and reduce littering.

While this programme includes drink containers of glass, aluminium and plastic between 150ml and 3 litres, there appears to be exemptions ie wine and liquor bottles, milk and some juice containers, I strongly urge that all drink containers be included.

To reach high recovery targets and to encourage widespread community participation, refund/return points should be conveniently located at retail outlets with involvement by the big retailers compulsory. I have seen and used the reverse vending machines at retail sites in Denmark, it is very convenient, easy to use and quickly becomes normal behaviour. There are many great Container Return Systems in use around the world, perhaps some could be implemented here. For example, in drinking establishments/bars you could pay a nominal container fee, above the cost of the drink, that fee is then returned to you when you return the drinking container.

Ongoing reviews of the Container Return Scheme should be conducted to evaluate the success/participation rate and adjustments and /or improvements made to achieve recovery targets, maximum participation and desired outcomes.

Everything, we can do to reduce the use and discarding of billions of plastic items by our society each and every year, is well worth doing.

I thank you for the chance to participate in this process. Should you require anything further, please contact me.

Kind regards

Maree Ziirsen



Sent from my iPad