



29 June 2017

Committee Secretary
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Sir/Madam,

Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017

Healthy Land and Water are pleased to write this letter in support of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017. As the pre-eminent organisation regarding waterway litter in South East Queensland we are supportive of measures which would generate reduction of the significant amount of plastics entering our waterways.

South East Queensland waterways are estimated to provide over \$10 billion per year to the region's economy through tourism, recreation, drinking water supply and fishing¹. Our waterways also provide us with a diversity of rich and meaningful experiences which underpin our quality of life.

Queensland is one of the largest producers of litter of all mainland states in Australia². This litter is picked up from the streets by stormwater drains and delivered to our waterways and Moreton Bay, causing considerable impacts to wildlife and ecosystems. In general, approximately 80% of waterway litter in our catchments is from a land based source, and much of the litter washed out of catchments during rainfall, if not collected, makes its way into our oceans.

In order to effectively address the issue of waterway litter pollution across our catchments, a holistic approach is required. The most effective way to reduce and mitigate the harmful effects of marine debris is to prevent it from entering the marine environment in the first place. Improved waste management efforts, targeted education and outreach activities, and technology solutions are required³.

We are supportive of measures which would generate reduction of the significant amount of plastics entering our waterways. In particular we support the following amendments to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011.

1. Part 3A – Banned Shopping Bags

Plastic bags consistently represent approximately 10% of all rubbish collected across the Healthy Land and Water Clean-Up Program. In terms of impacts on marine wildlife, the majority of items ingested by juvenile marine turtles in Moreton Bay were plastic and were positively buoyant⁴. Plastic bags degrade via sunlight and break up into smaller plastic pieces, eventually becoming microplastics. Recent research has found that coral on the Great Barrier Reef are ingesting

¹ Healthy Waterways Independent Economic Valuation

² Keep Australia Beautiful, National Litter Index, 2014

³ Hardesty, BD, C Wilcom, T] Lawson, M Lansdell and T van der Velde (2014). Understanding the effects of marine debris on wildlife. A Final Report to Earthwatch Australia.

⁴ Schuyler et al, 2012, 'To Eat or Not to Eat? Debris Selectivity by Marine Turtles', Plos One, 7(7)

microplastics⁵. Healthy Land and Water have provided a separate submission in relation to our support for a lightweight plastic shopping bag ban in Queensland, this can be referenced "*Healthy Land and Water - response to the Queensland Government Discussion Paper 'Implementing a lightweight plastic shopping bag ban in Queensland'*"

2. Part 3B – Beverage Container Refund Scheme

Thousands of plastic water bottles end up in South East Queensland waterways each year due to littering. Over the last ten years, plastic bottles have consistently been the number one item collected by the Healthy Land and Water Clean Up Program.

Healthy Land and Water support a World's Best Practice Container Refund Scheme that will reduce container litter and increase recycling. We also believe that a container refund scheme in Queensland should support and encourage job growth and social enterprise, and provide significant community benefits to Queensland.

We believe that the three primary objectives of the scheme should be to:

- Significantly reduce litter from beverage containers.
- Increase recycling of containers.
- Grow community benefits by providing income to charities and not-for-profits, encouraging social enterprises and new jobs and regional business opportunities.

We are enthusiastic about continued discussions with the Department on how we can best offer our support, including the integration of a Litter Pollution Index to measure and report on the effectiveness of waterway litter management interventions and source reduction strategies, using our world class Report Card as a tool to monitor success.

We look forward to continuing to work together to decrease the impacts of marine debris on waterway health in Queensland and support the community to transition to a Container Deposit Scheme and plastic bag ban by July 2018.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrian Zammit", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Adrian Zammit

Chief Operations Officer

⁵ Hall, N et al, 2015, Marine Biology