



3 July 2017

To the Committee;

Please accept the below submission in relation to the waste reduction and recycling amendment bill 2017.

**RE:           SUBMISSION TO PARLIMENTARY COMMITTEE  
              WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AMENDEMENT BILL 2017**

### **Part 3A Banned Plastic Shopping Bags**

We 100% support a ban on single use plastic bags, P.3A.

The bill proposes to ban lightweight bags up to 35 microns. This is consistent with other bans in Australia (SA, TAS, ACT and NT). However, we believe that bags up to 70 microns in thickness need to be addressed. The bill includes, in regulation, the option to increase the thickness of banned bags, should retailers seek to provide slightly thicker bags. We accept this as a compromise position but warn that should retailers provide increasing numbers of thicker bags that the Govt. must act quickly to increase the thickness of banned bags, *P.33B1(ii)*. A voluntary retailer scheme to phase out these thicker bags needs to be determined with timeframes and implementation to target when these bags will be reduced.

We 100% support the inclusion of degradable and biodegradable bags and the proposal to begin the transition immediately by requiring retail to supply alternative bags on request *P.99B(4)*. Additionally, we request that doggie litter bags be seriously considered in this ban. The doggie littler bags are being used by Local Government across Queensland and are being marketed on their degradability which in fact is causing a lot of harm on our beaches and along our coastlines. The degradable and bio-degradable dog littler bags deteriorate so fast they become part of the natural environment very easy, much more easily than other biodegradable or degradable detrimental products which will be included in the ban, we urge you to seek alternatives and re-educate as these need to be included in this amendment bill.

We hold serious concerns for the use and disposal of bait bags which are not included currently but with a review should also be included in this ban. Bait bags should be replaced with reusable containers or a take-back scheme managed by bait suppliers. Whilst campaigning for a plastic bag free Queensland a lot of Queenslanders expressed their concerns for these bags to be included in the ban due to their prolific presence in and around Queensland waterways. We have been in touch with bait bag companies and until there is any legislation around these bags they won't be seeking alternatives whilst they all agree they are an issue for the environment as a whole. They need assistance and support to make the change.

Banning plastic bags is just a first step in reducing plastic litter. The Govt. should establish a **Plastic Reduction Taskforce** to identify other problematic, single use and disposable plastic items (i.e. coffee cups, polystyrene, straws, takeaway containers, plastic food water and water bottles) for future policy action. However, this should not be pushed down to Local Government but rather State and Local working together with State leading the way with Local support. We believe however that local Govt. can play a more active role in this space by not hiring out open spaces or holding events that use single use products. Councils can make a by-law or local law that can stop people using single use products at Community and Public events, whilst in open spaces. This would cut down on the amount of waste at such events and see Local Government taking a more educational role for their communities, leading by example.

Whilst we campaigned Queenslanders raised concerned that providers/retailers of plastic packaging have a responsibility and should be made to review all their packaging practices and eliminate any unnecessary packaging from future use whilst seeking sustainable alternatives.

Helium balloon or any balloon releases along the Queensland coastline should be included in the ban. Discarded helium balloons are a littering offence in QLD but only when they land unfortunately mostly this is out at sea. The detrimental effects of these balloon releases on the environment can be managed at a state and local level by providing a local or by-law stating no balloon releases in open spaces. When the community book an open space these stipulations are in the agreement same as it would be to remove all rubbish from the site. This is something that can be managed at a Local and State level educating the community, implementing and creating change.

### **Part 3B Container Refund Scheme**

The scope includes all glass, plastic, aluminium and LPB beverage containers between 150ml and 3 litres, these will have a 10 cent refund applied. Milk, some fruit juice and health tonics are exempted. We question why beer bottles are included but wine and spirits are not included in the scheme. Wine bottles, in particular, are common in litter and their exclusion creates an unfair advantage over other alcoholic beverages. The scheme should be world's best practice with a recovery and recycling target trending up to > than 95% and set in regulation. To achieve this target most collection points need to be situated at retail outlets where it is most convenient for people to return containers. Consequently the involvement of retail (above a certain size) should be mandated.

The use of barcodes should be the primary means to verify refund containers on collection. We absolutely oppose the use of a weight formula to calculate container collections from public sources as it will inevitably be inaccurate and open to abuse.

All communities should have reasonable access to collection points to redeem refunds as defined by regulation. Collection points include, reverse vending machines at retail outlets, council and community drop-off centres, kerbside recycling bins and donation points run by NFP organisations. Beverage suppliers should pay the scheme Coordinator any required funds based on supply/sales (in advance) not on claims made by collectors, so that the scheme always has cash in the bank and is financially viable. Any excess funds received by the Scheme Coordinator should be used to improve the scheme and community environment projects. They should not be returned to bottlers.

All collected cans and bottles should be reused or recycled within a specified period (two years) or have refunds and handling fees returned. The scheme should be regularly reviewed with improvements introduced, including an increase in the refund if recovery targets are not met and penalties on bottlers. The Producer Responsibility Organisation should accurately reflect all small, medium and large bottlers as voting members, so the big bottlers do not dominate.

A public and retailer education and awareness program to explain the reasons for the ban and alternative practices should be introduced and education by way of advertisements from Queensland Government would be very beneficial for the wider community.

Submitted by:-



Jo Stoyel

