Committee Secretary
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

3 July 2017

Re: **Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017**

Dear Committee

This is a subject I feel very strongly about. Plastic bags are doing enormous damage to the environment including our oceans. Not only is the chemical pollution harming our ecosystems but it's also harming us via the food chain.

I live on an island where plastic rubbish on our beaches is a daily reminder of how ubiquitous plastic pollution has become. The need to reduce it is vital.

Banning single use plastic bags is big step in the right direction.

I thoroughly support the government's legislation to reduce plastics pollution by banning single use plastic bags. I understand this will mean banning lightweight plastic bags up to 35 microns.

Having watched the ABC's *War on Waste* programme I am aware that retailers in other states simply increased the thickness of the bags to get around the regulations. I understand the Queensland Government has the option via regulation to increase the thickness of banned bags. The government will need to act quickly should retailers start to increase the thickness of bags.

I support the inclusion of degradable and biodegradable bags. The transition should commence immediately by requiring retailers provide alternative bags when asked.

Bait bags should also be included in the legislation.

Whilst I applaud this legislation, pollution from plastics is a vast problem that requires multi-prong solutions. The government would be serving the community well to set up an organisation that identifies the various kinds of plastic pollutants and spear heads solutions.

I consider the legislation should include a ban on the release of non-essential helium balloons. We have thousands of helium balloons washed up on our beaches on this island alone. One local collected them up over a 2-year period to demonstrate just how big a problem it is for ocean life. http://www.redlandcitybulletin.com.au/story/3301646/balloons-are-killing-our-turtles/. There is documented evidence that turtles die from ingesting plastic bags and balloons. Releases of helium balloons (other than by registered organisations for research or monitoring) are not necessities of our life but healthy ecosystems are. Therefore the release of non-essential helium balloons should be banned and the provision included in the legislation.

I also support the container refund scheme. This is an excellent way to reduce waste. However wine bottles should also be included. Measures to maximise effective recovery and recycling with specific targets, e.g. above 95%, should be enshrined in legislation and regulation.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Yours sincerely

J.M. Aldenhoven.

Dr Jan Aldenhoven

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