

## **CCIQ SUBMISSION**

# **Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017**

▾ **Agriculture and Environment Committee**

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY QUEENSLAND**

**3 July 2017**

## Overview

1. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) makes this submission in response to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017 (the Bill) introduced to the Queensland Parliament, 14 June 2017, referred to the Agriculture and Environment Committee (the Committee).
2. CCIQ is Queensland's peak industry representative organisation for small and medium businesses. We represent over 25,000 businesses on local, state, and federal issues that matter to them. Our guiding focus is to develop and advocate policies that are in the best interests of Queensland businesses, the Queensland economy, and the Queensland community.
3. CCIQ welcomes the opportunity to provide comment to the Committee with respect to the Bill.
4. The following submission contains CCIQ's commentary and concerns regarding the Bill, specifically in relation to the banning of single use bags and the container refund scheme.

## Reduction of single-use plastic bags

5. The Queensland business community is strongly committed to balancing environmental sustainability with economic prosperity and recognise their vital role in minimising the impact of their activities on the environment.
6. However, despite a strong desire to do so, cost and expertise continue to represent the greatest barriers for participation in environmental management and sustainability programs. Complexity and lack of experience in waste management are also significant prohibiting factors for Queensland small businesses.
7. Currently CCIQ is the purveyor of small business waste management strategies, through the ecoBiz program, run in partnership with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.
8. EcoBiz has identified waste as one of the hardest quantifiable metrics in the program. CCIQ acknowledges that the management of single use plastic bags in Queensland is an important environmental issue and is an avoidable source of pollution.
9. CCIQ also recognises that although plastic bags are not a major contributor to waste pollution, 'banning the bag' may have a positive impact on the environment and reduce waste in waterways.
10. CCIQ wishes to emphasise the importance of education and awareness in affecting change in consumer behaviour to achieve the purpose of the Bill and not penalise those in the supply chain. CCIQ would have preferred to have seen an industry led scheme, with a gradual move to an all-out ban to allow for small businesses to adjust and for consumer attitudes to adjust.

11. CCIQ would not support the implementation of policy that penalises or imposes significant operational restrictions for small businesses.
12. CCIQ calls on a five-year review of the amendments to ascertain the impact on consumers, small businesses and the environment.

### **Container Refund Scheme**

13. CCIQ recognises that container refund schemes have a noted historical positive effect on communities and the environment.
14. Container refund schemes allow for business and innovation opportunities. CCIQ is encouraged by the initiative and hope to see positive impacts for business.
15. CCIQ is optimistic that businesses will benefit from the scheme, however are conscious of the added burden of compliance of the scheme.
16. CCIQ encourages the State Government to review the policy in three years to determine its effects on small businesses and the environment.
17. State government is urged to have an education and awareness campaign that will provide small businesses with further knowledge and information regarding the scheme.
18. CCIQ welcomes any opportunity to work with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection during the implementation of the project.

### **Conclusion**

19. CCIQ believes this Bill has some positive impacts for small businesses and the environment. CCIQ urges the government to undertake a review of the schemes once implemented to ensure any impacts to small business are negligible.
20. We thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Bill. CCIQ would welcome any opportunity to discuss this submission further. Should you have any enquiries please contact Kate Whittle, General Manager of Advocacy on [REDACTED]