



Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017

Submission

This submission is aligned with the key points of the Boomerang Alliance org.

Plastic Bags

- We fully support a ban on single use plastic bags
- 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 Government must act quickly to increase the thickness of banned bags
- A voluntary retailer scheme to phase out thicker bags has been mooted. This needs to establish a schedule to target when these bags will be reduced.
- We 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
- A public and retailer education and awareness program to explain the reasons for the ban and alternative practices should be introduced ASAP
- The mass release of helium balloons should be included in the ban. Discarded helium balloons are a littering offence in QLD but only when they land. The offence should be changed so the the deliberate release of helium balloons (in NSW it's more than 19) is an offence
- Bait bags are not included and should be. Bait bags should be replaced with reusable containers or a take-back scheme managed by bait suppliers
- 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 (ie. coffee cups, polystyrene, straws, takeaway containers, plastic food water and water bottles) for future policy action
- Providers/retailers of plastic packaging should review all their packaging and eliminate all unnecessary packaging from use
- Considering the entire life-cycle of single use plastic bags, we acknowledge that this single law will have many positive impacts, such as reducing the production of the single use plastic bags. Reducing their production is a small, but important, step toward reducing the demand of fossil fuel, reducing therefore global warming.

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

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