



Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook Inc

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TO: Committee Secretary
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane Qld 4000

Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017

Comments prepared by Margaret Moorhouse for

the Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook Inc

The Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook Inc. (ASH) is the Environmental Non-Government Organisation representing the conservation groups of the Cassowary Coast Region (collectively known as the Cassowary Coast Alliance (CCA)) at the Ministerial Environmental Round Table meetings held from time to time in Brisbane.

Our special interest is the Hinchinbrook Region, including the Cassowary Coast section of the GBRWHA.

Please accept our submission on the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017.

Our members are all too familiar with disintegrated plastic rubbish in the sea, as well as the reports from scientists as to the larger picture. We are also aware of the deleterious impact of disintegrated plastic particles throughout the world.

We generally support the Bill and have made some recommendations for its improvement.

Our members will be very pleased to see this Bill enacted. We appreciate the work, the consultation and negotiation, that has gone into it.

Please find below comments on the Bill assembled on behalf of the Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook Inc.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Moorhouse

Secretary ASH

BANNED BAGS SHOULD INCLUDE BAIT BAGS and HELIUM-FILLED BALLOONS

As coastal dwellers, our members see a great many fishermen’s bait bags (not defined as “a banned bag”) discarded direct into the sea, whether from boats or the shore. They wash up on beaches, in marinas (such as the Breakwater Marina Townsville, where I am drafting this submission), in turtles and in engine water intakes of vessels. Bait bags should be banned.

Helium-filled Balloons are another completely unnecessary environmental pollutant, particularly of water ways and the GBR lagoon. Helium-filled Balloons should be banned.

ASH Recommends bait bags and helium-filled balloons be included in the ban

PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE - PLASTIC GOODS manufactured without being made UV resistant.

Manufacturers have the capacity to determine how long a plastic article will retain its physical integrity in sunlight (UV), and how long before plastic goods disintegrate and go to landfill - unnecessarily soon - within weeks or months of purchase – not the buyer’s choice and a serious environmental pollutant. Clothes pegs are one example – and you can’t tell at the point of purchase if the pegs are UV resistant or will break up within weeks. Yes, pegs are cheap. Someone is making huge profits by importing plastic pegs that go to landfill within a few months. This cannot be dismissed as a matter of consumer choice: consumers cannot tell at the point of sale how well a plastic peg will perform in the sun. Other articles include household plastic buckets, some of which are barely safe (collapse if used to contain hot water) and kitchen containers.

It is a duty of governments to legislate to protect not only present-day consumers but to ensure the natural environment is liveable for future generations.

ASH Recommends the Queensland government review what measures may be available for preventing the sale of purchase-to-waste plastic goods.

TOPICS from EXPLANATORY NOTES	ASH COMMENT
Policy objectives and the reasons for them	SUPPORT
The legislation ensures that: ☑ for plastic bags: all retailers are obliged to meet the requirement not to supply a banned plastic shopping bag; and ☑ for containers: that all beverage manufacturers that manufacture a beverage product in a container covered by the scheme are taking a stewardship responsibility to managing the empty containers and paying for the costs of the scheme; and that consumers have reasonable access to a refund when they return eligible empty containers to a container refund point.	SUPPORT
<i>End of Waste Codes</i> The intention of the end of waste framework is for a waste to be approved for use as a resource, provided it meets very strict quality criteria that minimise the potential for environmental harm ... The intention of the end of waste framework is for a waste to be approved for use as a resource, provided it meets very strict quality criteria that minimise the potential for environmental harm	SUPPORT

<p>Alternative ways of achieving the objectives There are no other viable alternatives that would achieve the policy objectives other than the proposed Bill</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p>
<p>Estimated Cost of Government Implementation some government expenditure will be required to deliver broad public messaging these costs will be borne as part of the operational costs of the scheme small-scale infrastructure grants to community groups and remote local governments and communities.</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p>
<p>Consistency with Fundamental Legislative Principles (FLPs) amendments will not impose an unreasonable obligation on the holder of an end of waste approval.</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p>
<p>Consultation There is overwhelming public support for the introduction of a container refund scheme. While the beverage industry does have concerns regarding the potential impact of a scheme Implementation Advisory Group have divergent views around certain aspects of the scheme. This includes mandating in legislation the establishment of collection zones across the state and requirements for monopoly Network Operators for these zones</p> <p>This approach provides flexibility to ensure that a network of container refund points is established across the state without restricting contracting arrangements to a particular zone or through a particular operator... more market-driven approach and doesn't lock particular players out of participating in the scheme if a monopoly Network Operator does not contract with them.</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p> <p>The Bill seems to have been drafted with enough flexibility to cater for this new industry in Queensland, given its establishment in other Australian jurisdictions.</p>
<p>Consistency with legislation of other jurisdictions <i>Plastic shopping bag ban</i> <i>Container refund scheme</i> <i>End of Waste Codes</i></p>	<p>SUPPORT</p> <p>This consistency is very important to the success of the scheme (the same principle should be applied to a good many other state regulated practices such as vehicle registration) BUT NOTE our recommendation that bag ban should include those with thickness "less than 70 microns".</p>
<p>rPart 3A Banned plastic shopping bags 99A Objects of Part . The new section states that the objects are to: ☑ reduce the amount of plastic pollution by reducing the number of plastic bags that become waste and enter the environment as litter; and ☑ encourage retailers and consumers to consider whether a carry bag is necessary in the first instance and if a bag is needed then to use alternative shopping bags.</p> <p>Section 99B Meaning of banned plastic shopping bag and alternative shopping bag A <i>banned plastic shopping bag</i> is defined as a carry bag with handles that is made in whole or part from plastic, whether or not the plastic is degradable. The bag may be made of a thickness that is less than the thickness that is prescribed in regulation, or unless otherwise prescribed, is of a thickness less than 35 microns. A <i>banned plastic shopping bag</i> may also be a bag that is prescribed in regulation as a banned plastic shopping bag.</p>	<p>SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE But ASH recommends thickness be "less than 70 micron" (not "less than 35 microns")</p> <p>Although this adjustment can be made by regulation it would be better decided at the start, to avoid retailers supplying thicker bags.</p> <p>Currently shopper request "no bag" is often ignored. Quite some re-training will be required. Many staff however are already supportive of this impending ban.</p>
<p>99B The definition of degradable means plastic that is biodegradable, including material that is compostable under AS 4736 – 'Biodegradable plastics – Biodegradable plastics suitable for composting and other microbial treatment'—and plastic that is designed to degrade and break into fragments over time.</p>	<p>ASH recommends this definition be reviewed and upgraded to reflect modern scientific (physical and chemical) knowledge.</p>

	<p>This definition has turned out to have misled the public into believing (until recently) that plastic particles in the environment are harmless.</p> <p>The physical disintegration of plastic to nano-particle size, acceptable under this definition, omits determination of what the breakdown products must be. This has led to a plastic-infested planet and a plethora of planet-wide and possibly intractable ill effects.</p>
<p>99E Giving false or misleading information about banned plastic shopping bag</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p> <p>There will undoubtedly be retailers who will try to cheat the system and their customers.</p> <p>ASH recommends the fine for so doing be large enough that it will not be considered just a cost of doing business.</p>
<p>Queensland has one of the lowest recycling rates of mainland states and consistently ranks as one of the most littered states. The objects of the scheme recognise that social enterprise and community organisations can participate in the scheme in a variety of ways as well as benefit from receipt of refund amounts either directly or indirectly.</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p> <p>ASH recommends an emphasis on collection points being conveniently placed in public places.</p>
<p>99I How objects are to be achieved</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p>
<p>6 Amendment of s 155 (Purpose of chapter) ...A code or approval may, for example, stipulate that a waste becomes a resource only after the waste meets a certain quality stipulated in the code or approval and is delivered to the site of use. This would enable the department to better regulate certain wastes destined to become a resource, which, until used as intended, still have the potential to cause environmental harm, for example during transportation from the producer to the user.</p> <p>Section 158 Compliance with end of waste code <i>Clause 9</i> replaces section 158 with a new section that prescribes offences for not complying with the requirements of an end of waste code. An offence is prescribed for a registered resource producer who produces and uses, sells or gives away a resource under an end of waste code but does not comply with the requirements of the code. The maximum penalty for the offence is 1665 penalty units. Additionally, an end of waste approval is intended to be used to prove the practical application of using a particular waste as a resource and to determine if an end of waste code could be developed for the waste. In some cases, there may be risks of environmental harm that</p>	<p>STRONGLY SUPPORT</p> <p>Must ensure proper identification and classification and internal verification checks.</p> <p>ASH is aware of unsupportable claim made in a Development Application (2009) to ensure approval for works involving waste for purported beneficial re-use which would not have been approved if the waste had been admitted to have been intractable, as was the reality known to everyone concerned and freely admitted by the Consultant; but in the formal Application beneficial re-use was claimed and (thereby) Approval gained.</p>
<p>Part 3B Beverage container refund scheme 10c refund on glass, plastic, aluminium and LPB beverage containers size 150ml to 3 litres.</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p> <p>ASH recommends wine bottles be included</p> <p>ASH recommends plan for increase in refund amount in the case that response is slow.</p>

<p>WEIGHT FORMULA for container calculations</p>	<p><u>ASH opposes</u> weight as basis for calculation.</p> <p><u>ASH recommends</u> use of barcodes.</p> <p>Measuring by weight is too easy to abuse, hence will be abused. Apart from the general abuse of collection points in public areas, I can attest to practices of cheating in animal feeds by addition of nails, crushed concrete and feather meal.</p>
<p>OTHER MATTERS Potential for accumulation of unwanted used containers collected Flexibility and Review Social/economic equity</p>	<p><u>ASH recommends:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Penalty for stockpiling for longer than two years; 2. Review this scheme after three-five years to ensure the scheme will be effective in the long term; 3. Ensure membership of the Producer Responsibility Organisation represents all aspects of the trade including small businesses, and cannot be dominated by big players.
<p>308 Transition period for displaying refund marking on beverage containers the purpose of this section is to provide time for beverage manufacturers to display the refund marking on containers. It also provides a time period within which the operator of a container refund point may continue to receive a container that does not display a refund marking and still provide the refund amount to the person presenting the container</p>	<p>SUPPORT</p>