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3 July 2017

Committee Secretary  
Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000  
Email: [aec@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:aec@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Agriculture and Environment Committee

### **Re Inquiry into the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017**

Please accept this brief submission regarding the above Bill.

Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) is the peak conservation organisation in Queensland, with some 60 member groups across the state, each with their own significant membership bases. We are approaching our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of advocating for stronger conservation policy, law and practices, and have played a lead role in many critical campaigns to secure protection for Queensland's nature. QCC also works directly with other state and national conservation groups, and a number of regional conservation bodies in Queensland which focus more intensely on local and regional environmental issues within their particular geographic scope.

QCC is a member of the Boomerang Alliance, and we wish to express our support for the Boomerang Alliance's submission on this Bill. In particular, we wish to reiterate that:

1. We support a ban on single use plastic bags.
2. 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 Queensland government must act quickly to increase the thickness of banned bags.
3. A voluntary retailer scheme to phase out thicker bags has been mooted. We believe this needs to establish a schedule to target when these bags will be reduced.
4. 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
5. We believe a public and retailer education and awareness program to explain the reasons for the ban and alternative practices should be introduced as quickly as possible.

6. We believe that 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 such that the deliberate release of helium balloons is an offence.
7. We believe that bait bags should be included, and ought to be replaced with reusable containers or a take-back scheme managed by bait suppliers.
8. We see that banning plastic bags is just a first step in reducing plastic litter. The Queensland government should establish a Plastic Reduction Taskforce to identify other problematic, single use and disposable plastic items (such as coffee cups, polystyrene, straws, takeaway containers, plastic food water and water bottles) for future policy action.
9. We believe providers/retailers of plastic packaging should be required to review all their packaging and eliminate all unnecessary packaging from use.

Thank you for your time in considering the above comments.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Tim Seelig**

Coordinator

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