

## Agriculture and Environment Committee

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**From:** Julie Jackson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 4 July 2017 9:07 PM  
**To:** Agriculture and Environment Committee  
**Subject:** Plastic Bag Ban and Beverage Container Refund Scheme

**Categories:** submission

Dear Sir / Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017 (The Bill), which introduces a single-use lightweight plastic bag shopping ban and Beverage Container Refund Scheme in Queensland.

### Plastic Bag Ban

I **strongly support** the decision of the State Government to introduce a single-use lightweight plastic shopping bag ban (the Ban).

I **strongly support** the inclusion of biodegradable bags in the ban due to their evidenced detrimental environmental impact and their higher propensity to be littered. Further, the Ban includes bags of up to 35 microns. While this is consistent with other jurisdictions (SA, NT, ACT and Tasmania) I **strongly recommend** that:

- Section 99B (a) (ii) of the Bill be changed to include thicker plastics bags (between 35-70 microns). This is because:
  - the results of the Tasmanian lightweight plastic bag ban evidenced that classifying ‘thicker’ bags as ‘re-usable’ was not an effective measure;
  - I want Queensland to be a national leader, rather than repeat measures that have been proven ineffective;
  - department store plastic bags (commonly LDPE) have been identified as representing up to 38% of plastic bag litter (National Litter Index);
  - legislating for a 60 micron ban would make the use of alternative bags a more competitive and compelling option; and
  - including all plastic bags in the ban would avoid confusion, which may otherwise result in non-compliance.

Further, I **urge** the following recommendations to be considered:

- Appropriate funding for individual, community and retailer education, prior to and during implementation of the Ban. This is vital to the success and acceptance of the Ban.
- The effectiveness of the Ban could be greatly improved by establishing an independent task force. This would allow for:
  - comprehensive monitoring and review; and
  - improvements to be implemented efficiently in response to identified issues.
- Queensland should use this opportunity to become a leader in sustainability. This could be achieved in an efficacious manner by concurrently banning the following problematic and unnecessary single-use plastics:
  - plastic and polystyrene wrapping on fresh food and vegetables;
  - LDPE Bait Bags; and
  - a statewide ban on helium balloon releases, consistent with what is already in place in many councils and regions.

These measures should be considered one element of a ‘plastic pollution reduction plan’ to **progressively ban all problematic single-use plastics** and remove them completely from the waste stream.

**Beverage Container Refund Scheme**

I **strongly support** the introduction of the Beverage Container Refund Scheme (the Scheme) for Queensland. However, with regards to the prevalence of the issue of plastic pollution I **strongly advocate** that the following recommendations are considered:

- A comprehensive and transparent evaluation of the Scheme’s operation and success is conducted. This requires:
  - funding;
  - ongoing review; and
  - results made available to the public.
- The Scheme should be regularly reviewed and the required improvements implemented.
- The Scheme should be extended to include other beverage containers that contribute significantly to the waste stream such as:
  - milk containers up to 1L in volume; and
  - glass wine bottles.
- A 75% return rate within the first year of operation should be established as a minimum benchmark of success (based on the South Australian scheme results);
- The Scheme should work towards placing the state of Queensland as a leader in sustainability, operating with a recovery and recycling trend of greater than 95%.
- There should be reasonable access to collection points, particularly between urban and rural communities.
- Collection points need to be located in convenient locations such as retail outlets.
- The involvement of large retail outlets (above a certain size) should be mandated. However, the Product Responsibility Organisation should ensure that monopolisation of the scheme by large corporations does not occur.
- To assist this, the Product Responsibility Organisation should ensure it is equally representative between small, medium and large manufacturers.
- If there is evidence of a lack of compliance the deposit amount should be reviewed.
- Transparency, education and communication is vital to ensure widespread manufacturer, retailer and consumer understanding. This will support increased compliance.

Yours Sincerely,

**Julie Jackson**

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