

Monday, 4 June 2012

The Research Director  
Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

Attention: Mr Robert Hansen,

Dear Mr Hansen,

**Re: Submission on Environmental Protection ( GreenTape Reduction) and Other Legislation  
Amendment Bill 2012**

The Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of Queensland (inc) (WCRAQ) appreciates being provided the opportunity on behalf of its members to respond to the committee on this important piece of environmental legislation.

The WCRAQ has been an active stakeholder engaged with the Department in scoping this legislation and provides its endorsement to it with the following comments for the committee's consideration.

The association wishes to bring to the committees attention, advice as provided to the department, that the reforms proposed in the Bill, do little to remove our industry's broad legislative and regulatory impediments unless significant reforms are undertaken to align this Bill with a broader sectors reform and review process.

Queensland's Waste and Recycling Industry is estimated to have more than two (2) billion dollars' worth of assets employed or under management and its contribution to the state's economy is estimated to exceed one (1) billion dollars per annum. We directly employ more than 6,500 Queenslanders, with four times the amount of contractors not taking into account indirect and induced employment. (Source: WCRAQ member survey 2011).

The industry provides an important and essential service for all Queenslanders, facilitating on a daily basis the safe removal and management of community and business generated waste and recyclables.

Our concerns in respect to macro regulatory reform are as follows:

The waste and recycling industry's legislative and regulatory framework in which the sector now operates has now become so complicated, out-dated, conflicting and unaligned with the sectors growth, unless a more macro review is undertaken it is unlikely the states waste policy and economic agenda ( new jobs and investment) will be delivered in this sector.

Government inefficiencies in legislative and regulatory processes now directly hinder the adoption of new, more efficient technologies, industry's business confidence to invest, and generally our ability to operate efficiently in Queensland, making our sector uncompetitive both nationally and internationally.

The sector is currently over governed by the following State Acts of Parliament (excluding Federal Legislation).

- Environment Protection Act and subordinate legislation
- Waste Reduction and Recycling Act (WRR Act) and subordinate legislation
- Local Government Act and subordinate legislation
- Second Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act and subordinate legislation
- Sustainable Planning Act and subordinate legislation
- Transport Operations ( Road Use Management) Act and subordinate legislation
- Queensland Competition Authority Act
- Work Health and Safety Act and subordinate legislation.

WCRAQ is already engaged with two Government departments (within a single agency it's taken three years so far) attempting to negotiate changes to our industry's regulatory requirements?

In addition to these ongoing negotiations, we will also be making application to Government in coming months for additional regulatory amendments to an additional two pieces of legislation: being the Local Government Act and the Waste Reduction and Resources Act.

These new applications are as result of business impediments enshrined in the WRR Act and its regulations, as well the results of the forthcoming report by the Queensland Competition Authority (final report due in June) into the anti-competitive waste and recycling business practices being conducted by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council's Waste Business Unit.

Despite repeated approaches (made over 5 years) to Government for it to take action to stop illegal and un-licenced businesses establishing in the sector, the complexity and conflicts of Queensland's regulatory environment to either (a) establish a new business or (b) just to remain a lawful operator has resulted in an expanding culture where it's now easier (and is accepted by Government Regulators), to establish a waste and recycling business without any Government approvals (State or Local) in direct competition to lawful operators, than it is to comply with government requirements?

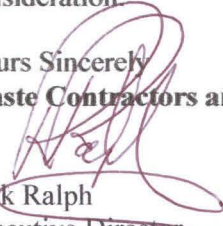
We offer Government an opportunity for it to use the Parliamentary Committee process and to initiate a formal and public review of identifying excess legislative burden and regulatory impediments on this important industry; and report back to Parliament key actions to be initiated to overhaul the complex, costly and ineffective legislative framework now imposed by Government, that is strangling both business growth and our business confidence.

The opportunity to undertake a formal investigation to remove multi-tiered legislative and regulatory roadblocks now placed on the industry, whilst introducing this new legislation would directly deliver a future business operating environment that gives the sector business confidence to invest and grow.

Such a review (as was the case of the United Kingdom several years ago) would give industry a framework on which to deliver new technologies, giving all Queenslanders better environmental outcomes, in a business sector that should be the fifth pillar of the Queensland economy to get it back on track.

We trust this letter finds resonance with the committee and the WCRAQ's proposal worthy of its consideration.

Yours Sincerely  
**Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of Queensland**



Rick Ralph  
Executive Director