



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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19 September 2018

Committee Secretary
Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
itdec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission: *Waste Reduction and Recycling (Waste Levy) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018*

Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Science (the Department) in relation to the *Waste Reduction and Recycling (Waste Levy) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018* (the Bill) and the *Waste Reduction and Recycling (Waste Levy) Amendment Regulation 2018* (the Regulation).

Council is supportive of the proposed changes to the waste management and resource recovery sectors through the introduction of a waste levy.

As the largest local government in Queensland, Council is a leader in the local government waste sector and in recent years has made significant advances in waste management and resource recovery. Improving waste outcomes is pivotal in meeting Council's goals to keep Brisbane clean, green and sustainable.

Council supports the position of the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) that all waste levy proceeds should be directed to developing waste management infrastructure and programs as opposed to non-waste related programs.

Council is concerned that residents, rate payers and commercial waste customers may be confused by the waste levy and its intended purpose. Council believes this may lead to issues such as customer confusion at Council operated resource recovery centres and an increase in illegal dumping.

Council believes a communication program is required to articulate the purpose and impacts of the waste levy.

- 2 -

Council is pleased to provide the following specific comments on the Bill and the Regulation;

The Bill

S73D – Annual payment to local governments

Council understands the Queensland Government's desire to see the annual payment as transparent to the community, however, Council also has concerns that placing this information on a rates notice has unintended consequences and administration costs including:

- administration costs to provide this information on the rates notices annually (at least \$100,000 per annum)
- legislative compliance in ensuring that current information on reprinted and backdated rates notices is always correct
- community understanding of what the information means and how it is relevant to residents and ratepayers
- extremely short time frame to achieve the intended outcome if the information is to go on the rates notices for the third quarter in November 2018.

The Regulation

Schedule 1 – Waste levy rates

The suggested levy increase dates of 1 January each year is not consistent with how local government conducts financial business and duplicates many standard Council processes at a time of year (January) where there is limited staff available and many public holidays. If 1 January each year is legislated, several costly challenges are imposed on Council, namely:

- sign boards at transfer stations must be amended twice each year (in January for the levy increase and in July for Council's standard fees and charges changes)
- notification to each customer twice per year to inform that fees and charges or levies are changing
- two sets of fees and charges must be adopted by Council each year (one from January to June, and the other from July to December)
- system configuration and testing changes must now be updated twice a year across multiple systems, (rates, weighbridge software, Contact Centre software)
- Council's web pages and Contact Centre scripting must be amended twice a year.

Council would prefer to see 1 July as the legislated date for waste levy rate changes.

Council would welcome an opportunity to attend the Parliamentary Committee Hearing in coming weeks to further discuss these issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Bill and the Regulation. If you require further information, please contact Mr Terry Bird, A/Manager, Waste and Resource Recovery Services, Field Services, Brisbane Infrastructure, on [redacted] or email [redacted]

Yours sincerely



Colin Jensen
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER