



Rockhampton Office
232 Bolsover St, Rockhampton
Gracemere Office
1 Ranger St, Gracemere
Mount Morgan Office
32 Hall St, Mount Morgan

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Our Ref: 4894
Enquiries: Waste & Recycling
Telephone: 07 4932 9000
Email: enquiries@rrc.qld.gov.au

Committee Secretary
Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

email: itdec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

RESPONSE TO WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (WASTE LEVY) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

The Rockhampton Regional Council (RRC) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make comment on the above Bill.

RRC is a regional leader in the management of waste and recycling and has invested significantly in its regional infrastructure to provide efficient and cost effective services to our community.

RRC acknowledge that significant change is required in the waste and recycling industry however, we reinforce our stated position that this should not be at the expense of the community.

RRC has reviewed the tabled Bill and requests consideration/clarification of the following points:

General Observations:

- Education is a key shortfall across Queensland. Funding (prior to and) from the levy needs to go towards the development of a state wide education programme, with targeted funds going to Councils to support education programs.
- The Bill is silent on the intent of Advance Annual Payments to Local Authorities beyond 2022. What is the State Government's intention regarding the annual advance on levy charges commencing from Year 5? The lack of transparency around the State Government's intention does not allow Councils and Industry the ability to plan for the long term future.

Exempt Waste:

- RRC is concerned that there appears to be no exemption for Council's internal waste stream. Council is committed to reducing our waste and improving our diversion from landfill however, if Councils internal waste stream incurs a levy charge, Council may need to increase its general rates to the household to cover this cost, therefore resulting in a direct cost to the household.

- Councils often internally subsidise waste costs for Sporting Clubs in order to assist community organisations with financial burden and to promote healthy, active lifestyles. If Sporting Clubs waste stream incurs a levy charge, Council may be required to increase its general rates to the household to cover this cost, therefore resulting in a direct cost to the household. Alternatively, these waste services could be considered as “Public Places”, and thus, exempt.
- Council notes the 6 September Media Release from Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts The Honourable Leeanne Enoch, wherein The Minister states “*Household municipal solid waste includes wheelie bin waste, **waste disposed of in public bins, and trips to the tip.***” We applaud the expanded definition and look forward to the relevant amendments to the current Bill.

Bad Debts Credit:

- Section 72K (e) (ii) must be amended or removed as many Councils current Fees and Charges (based on full cost recovery) for commercial operators are currently much higher than the proposed levy. This simply reflects the higher cost of service delivery in regional Queensland.

Offence to remove from site:

- The intent of Clause 38 of the Bill is unclear. The *Explanatory Notes* accompanying the Bill do not provide sufficient explanation to allow for interpretation. Please provide a specific example of an activity to which this clause may apply. Council currently scavenge from waste received in order to maximise diversion and in order to cover scavenging costs we run a small second hand goods shop on-site for the sale of these scavenged items.

Recycling Efficiency Threshold:

- Whilst it would appear that in Council’s circumstances, the MRF will be eligible for an exemption on residual waste until 30 June 2022 the impact beyond that date is somewhat unclear. If the MRF is to achieve the 85% threshold, the residual waste stream would then be eligible for a discounted rate however, given that nature of the arrangements with Council, the cost of disposal will ultimately be borne by the residents through increased charges (by the MRF) to Council to cover the cost of the levy.

Yours faithfully,



Michael O’Keeffe
Manager Rockhampton Regional Waste and Recycling