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Committee Secretary
Natural Resources, Agricultural Industry Development and Environment Committee
Parliament House
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30th July 2020

Dear Sir / Madam

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020

Sea Shepherd Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the *Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020* introduced into the Queensland Parliament on 15th July 2020.

As the second state, after South Australia, to introduce legislation which seeks to address the increasing problem of marine plastic pollution to the environment, Sea Shepherd commends the Queensland Government for developing legislation that bans a number of single-use plastic items.

With production and use of single-use plastics and ensuing leakage into the environment increasing to the detriment of ecosystems, biodiversity and potentially human health, we recognise the Queensland Government's commitment to reduce plastic pollution.

Like Sea Shepherd's stance on single-use plastics, during consultation on the *Single-Use Plastics Items Regulatory Impact Statement* in March 2020, Queenslanders strongly stated their position on single-use plastics with 94% of respondents supporting the introduction of a ban on the proposed single-use plastic items, and 90% supporting a start date of 1 July 2021.

Sea Shepherd specifically supports these key areas outlined in the Bill:

- Inclusion of a ban on the supply of single-use plastic straws, plastic beverage stirrers, plastic cutlery, plates.
- Provision for other single-use plastic items to be prescribed in regulation.
- Definition of compostable, for a plastic item, to fall under AS 4736 or AS 5810.
- Commencement date of 1 July 2021 – this provides sufficient time for individuals and businesses to prepare for the proposed ban.



In addition to single-use plastic straws, cutlery, plates and stirrers as stipulated in the amended Bill, Sea Shepherd recommends the following additional plastic items / measures be considered for inclusion in the future:

- Expanded polystyrene food and beverage containers including cups, bowls, lids, plates, clam-shell containers (of all sizes), meat trays
- All products made of oxo-degradable plastic
- Single-use coffee cups, lids and other plastic cups
- Plastic shopping / carrier bags (>35 Microns) including those labelled biodegradable
- Plastic cotton buds
- Wet wipes, including those labelled biodegradable
- Single-use plastic barrier (fruit and vegetable) bags
- Plastic balloon sticks, plastic balloon attachments (clips, cups, discs and ribbons) due to the harm they can cause to wildlife.
- A ban on excessive plastic food packaging and other takeaway food service items where there is an existing and reusable alternative.
- Additional bans on other problematic plastics including plastic bait bags and glitter, even those labelled biodegradable.

Sea Shepherd provides the following additional initiatives in support of the Government's broader plastics strategy:

- Investment in infrastructure and initiatives to support increasing the number of public water bubbler / water stations to reduce prevalence of single-use plastic water bottles in the environment.
- Smoking on all Queensland beaches should be banned, with on the spot fines for offences.
- Expanding education programs to support *Queensland's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan* e.g.:
 - Provide educational signage in multiple languages at known recreational fishing hotspots on the environmental impacts of plastic, particularly related to problem plastic fishing items.
 - Increase signage at popular beaches highlighting the impacts of plastics in our oceans, encouraging beachgoers to take their rubbish home or face fines.
- With the voluntary industry phase-out still not fully implemented, place a ban on the sale and manufacture of products containing microbeads, often found in personal care, cosmetic and household cleaning products. The deadline for voluntary industry phase-out by July 2018 is overdue by 2 years.
- Consideration of mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility schemes to ensure that manufacturers design products with the lifecycle of plastic in mind and have accountability and financial responsibility including. clean-up litter costs e.g. tobacco filters given cigarette butts are the number one item littered in Queensland and nationally.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Department officials the measures that the Government will use to assess the objective of a 20 per cent reduction in the plastic pollution from the single-use items by 2023. With our Marine Debris Campaign conducting monthly clean-ups in several locations across Queensland where a record of each item removed is uploaded to our national database, we make the offer to provide this data.

Plastic is now in every aspect of the marine food chain, from the tiniest krill to the largest blue whale and it affects all of us. The ocean provides us with most of the air we breathe, so putting the health of



our oceans first with immediate action with a strong plastics bill for Queensland, is putting the future of humanity first.

We look forward to the *Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020* becoming working legislation and the Queensland Government continuing to develop ambitious strategies and policies on other plastics and pollutants that pose threats to human health, marine life and the environment.

Yours sincerely

Jeff Hansen
Managing Director
Sea Shepherd Australia



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