

www.wildlife.org.au

Committee Secretary
Natural Resources, Agricultural Industry Development and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

By email: NRAIDEC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir or Madam

Comments on the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill

I have been directed by the State Council of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (Wildlife Queensland) to provide comment for consideration on the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill.

Wildlife Queensland is one of the longest established and most respected wildlife-focused conservation groups in Queensland. With over 6500 supporters Wildlife Queensland is a strong voice for our wildlife and its habitat. Wildlife Queensland is apolitical. Our aims reflect a strong interest in conserving our biodiversity, our natural landscapes and seascapes and protection of our environment. Wildlife Queensland is not opposed to ecological sustainable development but there needs to be a balance among the needs of the environment, sustainable development and use and society's needs.

Wildlife Queensland has taken this opportunity to provide comment. Broadly speaking Wildlife Queensland strongly supports the Bill. Many of our concerns with the plastic waste situation in Queensland have been considered and most of the issues raised in a submission to the Department of Environment and Science in April 2020 have been addressed. However as good as this Bill is, a brief review of the proposed legislative amendment clearly reflects the Bill can be strengthened.

The proposed Amendment Bill certainly addresses the great bulk of takeaway packaging such as plastic straws, stirrers, plates and bowls with coffee cups and heavyweight plastic bags included in the second list. Consideration should be given to including balloon releases and those single use sauce or condiment containers.

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Comments on the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill.

The major omission from Wildlife Queensland's perspective is not introducing a ban on expanded polystyrene cups and containers in the initial phase. The other significant issue of concern is the exemption for plastic items contained in packaged products such as fruit juice. There are alternatives available and as there is well over 6 months assuming the legislation is enacted before it becomes law that should give manufacturers adequate time to adjust to the new requirements. Provision could be made so that product produced prior to the enactment of the legislation may be sold without penalty.

Naturally Wildlife Queensland strongly supports the exemption provisions for those with a disability to access plastic items required and the Government is to be commended on addressing this issue.

Wildlife Queensland would welcome the ban as soon as possible and is of the view that July 2021 is a fair and acceptable compromise. This timeframe will enable the business sector to make the necessary adjustments and hopefully for the Government of the day to implement a broad community education program to inform and clarify the changes that will flow when the legislation is enacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Des Boyland', followed by a large, stylized capital 'D'.

Des Boyland, Policies and Campaigns Manager
30th July 2020.