

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 273

asked on Thursday, 2 March 2017

MS FARMER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide an update on the government's plan to reduce plastic pollution in Queensland by implementing a container refund scheme and ban on single-use plastic bags?

ANSWER:

On 25 November 2016, a discussion paper 'Implementing a lightweight plastic shopping bag ban in Queensland' was released. Submissions closed on 27 February 2017. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection received over 26,000 submissions with over 95% of responses supporting commencement of the ban on 1 July 2018.

On 18 February 2017, the discussion paper 'Implementing the Queensland Container Refund Scheme' was also released. Submissions closed on 20 March 2017. Over 2,600 submissions were lodged providing overwhelming support for the introduction of the Container Refund Scheme (CRS). Feedback around key features of the scheme such as its structure and operating arrangements and accessibility, are currently being analysed in more detail.

Extensive stakeholder consultations have taken place and will continue to occur through an Implementation Advisory Group and key sectoral technical working groups. Feedback from these groups and the public consultation process will help inform the development of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017 (the Bill), to provide for the introduction of the container refund scheme and lightweight plastic shopping bag ban while minimising potential negative impact on consumers and industry.

In addition, a study investigating the social and economic benefits of a CRS, with a specific focus on the benefits to Indigenous, remote and regional communities is being undertaken and a Preliminary Impact Assessment will be prepared during the development of the Bill.

The Government wants to allow a long lead time before the commencement of both initiatives on 1 July 2018, to allow retailers, the beverage industry and consumers time to understand the initiatives and adjust their behaviour and practices where necessary. We also need time for container collection infrastructure to be put in place. To give this lead time I would anticipate introduction of the Bill in the middle of this year.