



Hon Dr Steven Miles MP
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and
Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef

Ref CTS 5566/17

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27 MAR 2017

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 2 March 2017 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 2688-17 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. Please accept this letter as my response to this petition and I request that, under Standing Order 125 you table the response by Thursday, 30 March 2017.

I too am concerned about the environmental impact of litter on Queensland's marine ecosystems, in particular the Great Barrier Reef.

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection has commenced work on a Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan aimed at preventing plastic from entering the environment and reducing the amount of plastic already there.

Two important initiatives that support this plan are the lightweight plastic shopping bag ban and the container refund scheme.

On 1 July 2018, the Queensland Government will be introducing a ban on the supply of single-use plastic shopping bags, including biodegradable shopping bags. Plastic bags are a conspicuous component of the litter stream and are known to entrap and harm marine life.

The Queensland Government will also introduce a container refund scheme to commence on 1 July 2018. This will work by providing a 10 cent refund for any eligible container which is taken to an approved container collection point for recycling and provide an incentive for people either not to litter in the first place or to clean up littered beverage containers.

The Litter and Illegal Dumping Unit (LIDU) of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection runs a partnership program that aims to help community and industry stakeholders tackle litter related issues through activities that change people's behaviour.

The LIDU also provides funding to Healthy Waterways and Catchments to assist in education and clean ups of waterways and are supporting a project to review infrastructure options around marine debris collection. Details of these initiatives can be found on the Healthy Waterways and Catchment's website at <http://healthywaterways.org/initiatives/educate/cleanup>. For more information on this and other initiatives, please contact Ms Vicki Hall, Manager on telephone (07) 3330 5457.

Queensland local governments have consistently supported action to combat litter and protect our waterways and environs from plastic pollution. The Queensland Government cooperates with local government in the development of its actions to reduce plastic pollution and will continue to encourage local governments to play their part in protecting our environment from this type of pollution.

In particular, the issue of storm water and other drainage debris traps falls under the authority of local governments. In Queensland, existing legislation already provides for close control of stormwater, including the installation of gross pollutant traps in new developments.

The Queensland Government is also providing, over the next four years, \$2 million of support in the South-East Queensland and Great Barrier Reef catchments, to assist local governments with the management of runoff and impacts from development sites.

Ongoing funding for local government infrastructure, including the installation of stormwater management devices is provided through the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.

A strategic assessment of sources of marine litter will be undertaken during development of the Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan, to determine the most critical points of intervention for the next phase of action.

Should you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Kylie Hughes, Director, Waste Policy and Legislation on telephone (07) 3330 5020.

Yours sincerely



DR STEVEN MILES MP
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