



Hon Andrew Powell MP  
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection

Ref CTS18527/12

17 DEC 2012

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

Level 13  
400 George Street Brisbane 4000  
GPO Box 2454 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3239 0844  
Facsimile +61 7 3224 2496  
Email [environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil*

I refer to your letter of 29 November 2012 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 1907-12 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The petition draws to the attention of the House that Australians use approximately four billion lightweight plastic bags every year, that vast amounts of fossil fuel are required to produce these bags and that at least 77 species of marine wildlife found in Australian waters are affected by marine litter. The petitioners therefore request the House to introduce legislation for putting a ban on single use light weight plastic bags at retail points of sale in Queensland by the end of 2012.

The Queensland Government is committed to waste reform in Queensland. The first part of the reform process was the repeal of the industry waste levy, which took effect on 1 July 2012.

An integral part of the reform agenda is the development of an industry-led waste strategy. This will involve a review of the current strategy – *Queensland's Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy 2010-2020*. There will be an opportunity during this review and subsequent preparation of a new strategy to identify priority products and wastes, along with suitable management approaches.

I am aware that several jurisdictions, including South Australia and the Northern Territory, have banned plastic shopping bags. Before Queensland can take a similar approach, the cost implications for the community and businesses of any regulatory intervention must be fully considered. The government does not want to be in the position of having removed one cost to Queenslanders in the form of the levy only to introduce a new scheme that may come with additional costs to the community and business.

I hope this information has been of assistance to you. Should you have further enquiries, please contact Ms Kylie Hughes, Manager, Waste Policy and Legislation of the department on telephone 3330 5020.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Powell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**ANDREW POWELL MP**  
**Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection**