

PLASTIC BAGS HAVE YOUR SAY!

Littered plastic bags cost Queenslanders over \$4 million a year in clean-up costs and take thousands of years to fully break down.

Plastic bags are one of the most conspicuous items in the litter stream and pose real threats to land and marine environments.

They often end up in waterways where they endanger marine life. They can also clog drains and waterways, leading to increased risk of flooding.

The department has been talking to stakeholders as part of an investigation into options to restrict the use of single-use plastic bags and reduce the environmental impact from littered bags. Options explored have included:

- introducing a statewide ban on single-use, lightweight plastic shopping bags
- banning the supply of free single-use plastic shopping bags
- voluntary retailer action
- education and awareness
- better litter management and improved litter infrastructure.

The Department hosted a workshop on 14 October 2015, as the first step to start the conversation about what options we can harness to mitigate the impact of plastic entering our marine environment. This forum was an opportunity for all parties to get together and work out how to deal with plastic bag pollution.

Based on consultation to date, the Queensland Government has decided to reduce the amount of plastic pollution in our environment by introducing a ban on the supply of lightweight, single-use, supermarket-style plastic shopping bags.

The government is also working with other states to develop complementary voluntary action to reduce the use of heavier-weight, department store plastic bags.

The ban will only come into effect after extensive consultation and preparation, and with enough time to allow retailers and consumers to adjust to the change.

Your feedback and ideas on the topics raised in this discussion paper can be provided online at <https://www.northburnett.qld.gov.au/>

Submissions close on 27 February 2017.

Source: Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.