



Strategic Environment and Waste Policy
Department of Environment and Science
GPO Box 2454 Brisbane Qld 4001

Re. Transforming Queensland’s Recycling and Waste Industry

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the discussion paper: “*Transforming Queensland’s Recycling and Waste Industry*”.

QTIC is the state’s peak body for tourism in Queensland and represents the interests of the tourism industry. QTIC is an independent membership-based organisation with more than 3,000 members, operating in all sectors of the tourism industry, including business operators, Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs), sector associations and education providers.

The tourism industry in Queensland contributed \$25.0 billion to Queensland’s Gross State Product (GSP), representing 7.8% of total GSP¹. Tourism generated \$7.4 billion in export earnings in the year ending June 2017², making it one of the state’s largest export industries accounting for 11.1% of total Queensland exports. The tourism industry consists of over 54,000 businesses across Queensland; nine out of ten of these businesses are small to medium enterprises.

QTIC acknowledges the impost that another levy will have on a large number of the tourism operators in Queensland. For small and medium enterprises across the state this means that businesses will have to absorb these costs in their operations, adding more pressure to businesses and reducing profit margins. These implications can be quite significant on small to medium businesses. However, there are great opportunities for businesses to develop stronger waste management practices, efficiencies and therefore reduce their waste and their costs with sufficient support through this transition period.

Concerns are raised in particular for those operating on islands or in remote locations that already have large fees for waste management. It is important that further impost is not put on this sector. Consideration should be given to concessions or special consideration to those already negotiating challenging waste management practices.

¹ Tourism Research Australia, *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2015-2016*

² Tourism Research Australia - *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2015-16*, Queensland Government Office of Economic and Statistical Research - Overseas exports of goods by industry.

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In the implementation of this levy, QTIC supports the Department's recommendation to provide small business and industry funding to develop an awareness and capacity building program to reduce the waste being produced by businesses. There is a great opportunity for the ecoBiz program to link with industry bodies to gain greater reach across the state and facilitate cluster based workshops to provide businesses practical advice to minimise the impact of the levy on businesses.

The consultation document highlights that "*Queensland has one of the worst resource recovery and recycling rates of the Australian jurisdictions*" – it is important to gain an understanding the barriers and to work with businesses to overcome these. Research indicates that often a lack of action stems from little incentive for businesses to do more, or a lack of knowledge regarding how to improve their waste and recycling practices. A recent report by Deloitte examined barriers to participating in the Circular Economy³, company culture and mindset was identified as one of the key barriers impacting engagement with this waste minimisation strategy. A conservative supply chain and consumer expectations were also considered major impediments to business engagement with this concept. In order to overcome this barrier Deloitte assert that government intervention is key to galvanising action. If this is the case, such a levy is likely to encourage action so long as there is sufficient understanding of the implications and opportunities.

To build understanding of the implication and opportunities, QTIC advocates for the development of support materials for business owners. The development of materials should offer practical waste minimisation strategies and tips for reduction of waste across supply chains. Alongside these measures there needs to be a clear communication strategy ensuring that information is transparent and readily available to help businesses transition. Without proper communication and facilitation of knowledge, gaining buy-in among businesses will be challenging – particularly in regional and remote communities.

For all enquiries regarding the points raised in this letter, please contact me or the QTIC Policy Team on (07) 3236 1445 or email policy@qtic.com.au.

Kind regards



Brett Kapernick

General Manager Strategy and Deputy Chief Executive

³ Kirchherr, J., Hekkert, M., Bour, R., Huijbrechtse-Truijens, A., Kostense-Smit, E., & Muller, J., (2017) Breaking the Barriers to the Circular Economy. Deloitte.