

**INQUIRY INTO WASTE AVOIDANCE AND RESOURCE
RECOVERY AMENDMENT (PLASTICS REDUCTION)
BILL 2021**

Organisation: Penrith City Council

Date Received: 3 May 2021



Our reference:
Contact: Tracy Chalk

3 May 2021

The Director
Portfolio Committee 7
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

By email: PortfolioCommittee7@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Director

Plastic Reduction Bill

Please find attached Penrith City Council's submission regarding the Plastic Reduction Bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and should you require further information please contact Resource Recovery Education Officer Jarrod Loobeek by email or by telephone .

Yours sincerely

Tracy Chalk
Waste & Resource Recovery Manager

RELEVANT ACT

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment (Plastics Reduction) Bill 2021

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Waste and Resource Recovery

AUTHOR

Jarrod Loobeek

DATE

26/4/21

POSITION

Resource Recovery Education Officer

Introduction

Penrith City Council is a recognised leader in sustainable waste management, particularly our household organic waste recycling service. Council is committed to actively supporting our community to reduce waste sent to landfill through reducing, reusing, recycling and generally disposing of waste responsibly. Council's Waste and Resource Recovery Team are committed to innovation and support of a circular economy. We provide domestic and commercial waste collection and recycling services and promote waste avoidance and resource recovery. We also play a role through the approvals and regulation processes as regulator of building and land development activity.

Plastics Reduction Bill Comments

Penrith City Council Waste and Resource Recovery team supports the introduction of a targeted plastic reduction plan as part of the *2021 Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Bill*. This document is an important step towards increased waste avoidance, diversion and resource recovery. The targets outlined as part of the *Plastics Reduction Bill* will help to promote alignment of waste education across NSW and inform Penrith's local and region Waste Strategy.

Proposed section 48D (iii)

Regarding fitting of all new washing machines with lint filters for microplastics, it is important to consider the disposal method for these trapped microplastics. While this is a thoughtful initiative, there needs to be clear guidelines surrounding cleaning of filters to ensure owners are aware of correct disposal practice. If these filters are simply rinsed out with water over a sink this will render the filter pointless. A customer awareness campaign and requirements for signage/instructions need to sit alongside this proposal to ensure its effectiveness.

Proposed section 48D (iv)

It is important that there is consistency around the standards of compostable packaging and that these items can be handled by home and commercial composting systems according to Australian Standard of Composting. Regarding recyclable packaging, it is important to ensure that the recycling solutions are convenient for residents and clearly outlined on packaging. Ideally these recycling options would be available via kerbside collection and be clearly advertised to increase consumer confidence in the recycling sector. With these proposed changes there will be a significant increase in the amount of recycled material so it's important

to ensure these targets are backed up with the necessary infrastructure and markets to deal with an increase in material load.

Proposed section 48D (vi)

While mentioned earlier in the document, polyethylene is not specifically mentioned in the elimination table. It would be prudent to mention polyethylene packaging alongside polystyrene given these types of plastics are often used together in the packaging of e-waste, furniture, whitegoods and other household appliances.

Proposed section 48H

This section attempts to provide some assurance that an attempt will be made to prevent banned plastic goods being sold into NSW from other states and territories. The *Plastics Reduction Bill* would benefit from a stronger approach to dealing with imported goods manufactured in Australia or overseas to prevent consumers and businesses circumventing state legislation to purchase plastic goods. The NSW government should liaise with the Commonwealth government to explore options to deter the importation of banned plastic goods e.g. tariffs and levies.

Proposed section 48P (b)

While the functions of the Commission are made clear throughout the *Plastics Reduction Bill*, the role of industry and businesses is only mentioned in passing in section 48P (b). Outlining minimum mandatory reporting requirements for industry would strengthen the weight of proposed elimination targets and would provide a stronger knowledge base for the Commission to report on NSW's plastic reduction obligations.

Proposed section 48Q

For the purposes of transparency as well as industry and consumer confidence, the Commission's annual report should be made accessible to the public no later than at the same time a copy is provided the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament.

General Comments

A greater focus on research and development would strengthen the goals of the *Plastics Reduction Bill*. It is important to ensure solutions for plastic waste are long-term so local councils and businesses can confidently invest in these solutions and work them into their waste management strategies. Recycling solutions should meet the relevant Australian standards and undergo rigorous testing to ensure they do not inadvertently contribute to plastic pollution in the environment.

As part of the education arm of the *Plastics Reduction Bill*, a list of easily available alternatives to plastic should be made readily available for businesses. These alternatives should be affordable and easily accessible, especially for small businesses to ensure a smooth transition ahead of any plastic bans. Given the increase in demand for these alternatives, there needs to be assurance that there are sufficient supplies of these products available and that timeframes of procurement and supply contracts are considered in the elimination timeframes.