



Single-use plastic products ban

Full consultation report



Queensland
Government

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Executive summary

The Queensland Government released Tackling Plastic Waste, Queensland's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan (the Plan) on 7 November 2019.

A key action of the Plan was the introduction of legislation in 2020 to enable a ban on the supply of specific single-use plastic items, starting with straws, hot and cold drink stirrers, plates and cutlery.

The proposed ban will help reach the government's target of a 20 per cent reduction in plastic pollution caused by these items by 2023.

Targeted discussions occurred through a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), comprised of representatives from peak bodies, impacted stakeholder groups and organisations (see Appendix 1), and an Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC).

The SAG strongly supported the proposed introduction of legislation to ban the supply of the identified single-use plastic items, and provided some key considerations for the ban:

- approaches to minimise costs to businesses operating nationally through a harmonised, and where possible, consistent approach to other states
- allowing sufficient timeframes for the commencement of the ban, noting that at least 12 months lead time was appropriate
- providing appropriate exemptions for people with disability and healthcare needs to be able to access single-use plastic items.

Public consultation on a Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (CRIS) was to have taken place between 13 March and 15 April 2020. However, following requests for an extension of time the consultation was extended until 30 April 2020. The CRIS proposed three options, in addition to maintaining the status quo (Option 1):

- Option 2: Introduce a legislated ban on the supply of single-use plastic straws, stirrers, plates and cutlery.
- Option 3: Implement non-regulatory approaches, including greater education and awareness.
- Option 4: Install additional litter collection and clean up infrastructure.

“Banning these items, with appropriate exemptions, is consistent with the approach being taken in other jurisdictions and represents a sound starting point for the process of phasing out problematic and unnecessary single-use plastic items,” Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation.

The full policy options are outlined in the CRIS.

Consultation was supported by a 'Have Your Say' communications campaign, raising awareness about the proposed ban and how people could provide their feedback. The campaign reached over 5,003,900 people through social media, 980,190 people through Spotify and in excess of 897,560 people through newspapers.

Information on the consultation process was provided through the Queensland Government's Have Your Say website, where people could provide feedback through an online survey. Additionally people could send feedback directly by email or post.

A total of 19,622 submissions were received; 18,942 through the online survey and 680 written submissions through email and post.

Submissions received by email and post provided clear identification of stakeholder groups, predominately representing:

- environmental non-government organisations (NGO)/ charities (18)
- commercial businesses (9)
- peak bodies (8)
- community organisations (5)
- government (4)
- academia (1)
- individual community members (635).

The feedback received from these organisations and individuals provided a cross section of all stakeholder groups impacted by the proposed ban. The most active stakeholder group was from the environment NGO sector, with 76 per cent of responses representing individual community members.

The feedback expressed overwhelming support for a proposed ban on the specified single-use plastic items, with 94 per cent of all respondents in favour of the ban on straws, stirrers, plates and cutlery.

Furthermore, 90 per cent of all respondents thought that a start date for the ban on 1 July 2021 provided sufficient time for individuals and businesses to prepare.

Thirty per cent of respondents supported an exemption to allow the continued supply of single-use plastic items that are part of a shelf-ready packaged product, for example, a juice box with an attached plastic straw or a yoghurt with an attached plastic spoon under the lid. Similarly, feedback suggested that alternative, more sustainable materials were available as substitutes for these items.

All submissions supported options that recognised people's disability and healthcare needs, with over 50 per cent supporting the provision of these items through healthcare businesses such as pharmacies, hospitals and dental and medical clinics.

The majority of respondents (80 per cent) thought that more voluntary action, such as educational campaigns to increase awareness of the impacts of single-use plastics in the environment, would help to reduce plastic pollution.

Protecting the environment was identified as the key benefit of banning single-use plastic products. Fifty-seven per cent of submissions received through email and post supported the ban to reduce the impacts that single-use plastic products have on the environment, and to help preserve our wildlife, marine life, oceans and beaches.

All feedback supported extending the ban to other single-use plastic products, including takeaway containers, cups, polystyrene cups and containers, oxo-degradable plastics, takeaway coffee cups, heavyweight 'boutique style' plastic shopping bags, fruit and vegetable single-use plastic bags, balloons and balloon sticks, and bioplastic.

“The Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia supports the use of regulation to eliminate single-use plastics, given these items are essentially waste and minimising their use will provide benefits in reducing pollution, increasing reuse, and ideally, improving both the ability and quality of materials to be recovered.”

Following overwhelming support of the proposed ban, the Queensland Government will introduce legislation in 2020 to ban the supply of single-use plastic straws, cutlery, plates and stirrers. The ban will commence no earlier than 1 July 2021.

This support is consistent with previous consultations on both the Queensland Government's ban on single-use lightweight plastic shopping bags and the container refund scheme. Globally, nationally and within Queensland, community awareness and concern about plastic consumption and pollution is at an unprecedented level. There is also increasing community pressure and expectation for businesses and governments to do more to address the issues surrounding single-use plastic items.

This consultation report has been developed in place of a Decision RIS. This is because there is a lack of Queensland-specific data to enable the development of a detailed cost benefit analysis—a standard requirement for a Decision RIS. Specifically, there is insufficient data and evidence on:

- the volume of single-use plastics litter in Queensland that is specific to the items to be covered by the ban (i.e. the size of the problem)
- the economic, social and environmental impacts that can be directly attributed to litter pollution from the specific single-use plastic items in Queensland (i.e. the impact of the problem).

However, despite the lack of Queensland-specific data, there are various studies which indicate that the adverse economic and environmental impacts of single-use plastics, as well as plastic waste more generally, are likely to be significant.

The support for the ban received from the consultation process suggests that people believe there are also intrinsic and intangible benefits to banning single-use plastic items, such as:

- preserving Queensland’s natural environment, a socially and culturally significant asset for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations
- the feeling of individual and collective pride of Queenslanders taking decisive action to help the environment
- avoiding unnecessary, short-term resource use that could have long-term consequences for the Queensland environment.



Background

The introduction of legislation that would enable a ban on the supply of specific single-use plastic items, starting with straws, hot and cold drink stirrers, plates and cutlery is a key action of Tackling plastic waste, Queensland's Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan (released on 7 November 2019). In assessing the feasibility of a proposed ban, timing, exemptions and extending the ban to other single-use plastic products was considered.

Consultation undertaken during the introduction of the Queensland Government's single-use lightweight plastic shopping bag ban and container refund scheme, showed community expectation and strong support for government action in addressing other plastics. Furthermore, it is evident that significant voluntary action is already being taken across the community, business and industry sectors.

Before introducing the proposed ban, and to ensure fundamental legislative principles and human rights assessments are met, exemptions that provide for people's disability and healthcare needs have been included. Ongoing consultation with impacted stakeholder groups will enable the identification of appropriate and effective solutions.

The full policy option for the proposed ban is outlined in the Queensland Governments' Single-use Plastic Items Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (CRIS).

To understand the social and economic impacts with the proposed introduction of a ban, targeted and broad consultation is critically important and has been undertaken through multiple avenues.



Purpose and scope of document

Through the consultation processes, the Queensland Government sought feedback on the impacts and feasibility of introducing a proposed ban on the supply of specific single-use plastic items, starting with straws, hot and cold drink stirrers, plates and cutlery, with the ban on these items proposed to commence on 1 July 2021.



This consultation report outlines the actions undertaken for this purpose and summarises the results of the consultation. While consultation was undertaken through a Consultation RIS process, a Decision RIS (DRIS) has not been prepared. As well as providing a summary of the consultation process and submissions, this report also provides clarification for the approach taken to not progress to a DRIS.

The Queensland Productivity Commission requested additional information be provided in the development of the DRIS in order for it to be considered adequate for decision-making purposes. The DRIS needed to be able to:

- provide evidence of the magnitude and costs of the single-use plastic pollution problem generated in Queensland, and demonstrate that existing efforts (for example, voluntary industry and consumer changes) will not adequately address the problem
- present adequate analysis on the extent to which each option would address the problem (in particular, the likely overall reduction in litter or pollution from banning specific plastic items once product substitution is accounted for) and the costs and benefits involved, including social and environmental impacts
- identify any potential unintended impacts, for example, whether substitute products may impose a greater adverse impact than the banned plastic items for people with disability or healthcare needs

- consider any alternative options that may achieve the stated objective to reduce plastic pollution at a lower cost (that is, whether alternative policies can more effectively and efficiently reduce plastic pollution, including options targeted at broader plastic pollution rather than specific single-use plastics)
- demonstrate that the community will be better off if the preferred option is implemented, including:
 - » the reduction in choice for consumers under a ban is outweighed by the benefits of the introduction of a ban, and
 - » the associated implementation and enforcement costs will deliver a net benefit to the Queensland community.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) were engaged to undertake this work. In doing so PwC determined that while there was significant evidence to demonstrate the impacts of plastics in the environment, there was a significant lack of data and information in relation to the impact from the items proposed for the ban in Queensland. In addition, although litter audits conducted across the state by various groups show there is evidence of single-use plastic items contributing to pollution, there remains issues with the reliability of the data that precludes replicable baseline information to measure the extent of the problem within Queensland.

The DRIS was not progressed as it was determined that the scarcity of Queensland-specific data did not enable the development of an effective detailed cost benefit analysis to sufficiently quantify the identified options against the current situation in Queensland, to the standard required by a DRIS. Specifically, the lack of available data and evidence relating to:

- the size of the problem: lack of data on the volume of single-use plastics litter in Queensland that is specific to the items to be covered by the ban
- the impact of the problem: insufficient evidence on the economic, social and environmental impacts that can be directly attributed to litter pollution from the specific single-use plastic items in Queensland.

However, the results of consultation indicate that, despite the lack of quantifiable information available there is significant support for the introduction of a ban on the supply of single-use plastic straws, stirrers, plates and cutlery.

Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement

The Single-use Plastic Item Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (CRIS) identified the problem with single-use plastic items, stating a clear objective for government action, and introduced a range of possible options to address the problem. The CRIS considered the impact of these options and provided a recommended option.

The government's stated objective was a target of a 20 per cent reduction in plastic pollution caused by these items by 2023. The CRIS identified and assessed three options, in addition to maintaining the status quo (Option 1):

- Option 2: Introduce a legislated ban on the supply of single-use plastic straws, stirrers, plates and cutlery.
- Option 3: Implement non-regulatory approaches, including greater education and awareness.
- Option 4: Install additional litter collection and clean up infrastructure.

The CRIS provides an overview of action already being undertaken in other states, territories and local governments. Since the release of the CRIS, the South Australian government introduced legislation into Parliament (30 April 2020) and the Australian Capital Territory is continuing work to ban single-use plastic straws, stirrers and other items. Local governments across Queensland are also committing to reduce single-use plastic items at council operations and events and a number of major councils have already ceased the use of specified single-use items.

Retailers, including major supermarket companies, have stopped selling plastic straws and national quick-service restaurants are phasing out single-use plastic straws and stirrers. There is a definitive move locally and globally for action to reduce the impact, consumption and pollution of single-use plastic items.

Despite the lack of Queensland-specific data related to the single-use plastic items to be included in the proposed ban, there is broad and compelling evidence that plastic is persistent in the environment. In Queensland, over 2,500 tonnes of household litter, including single-use plastics, are illegally dumped each year.



Analyses by Tangaroa Blue¹ and Clean Up Australia² following targeted beach clean ups found that plastic straws were one of the top ten most commonly identified litter items.

Many types of plastics are able to persist for hundreds of years as micro plastics which have been found in all parts of the food chain, drinking water, productive agricultural soil and the air. This is driving an overwhelming need and community expectation for government to deliver more positive actions.

¹ <https://www.tangaroablue.org/resources/reports-publications/reports/>

² https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/edo61800/files/uploaded/QLD_Rubbish%20Report_2019.pdf

Glossary

The below terms are used within the report.

Acronym/Term	Definition
AFGC	Australian Food and Grocery Council
APCO	Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation
ARA	Australian Retailers Association
DES	Department of Environment and Science
IDC	Inter-departmental Committee
NGO	Non-government organisation
NRA	National Retail Association
RIS	Regulatory Impact Statement
SAG	Stakeholder Advisory Group
SSQ	Smart Service Queensland



Consultation

Targeted consultation

To deliver the Queensland Government's intention of introducing legislation which ensures comprehensive understanding and consideration of its economic, social and environmental impacts, mechanisms to enable targeted consultation were established through the formation of a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) and Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) in February 2020. The Queensland Government also sought to understand and recognise the needs of the disability, healthcare and aged care communities in the options developed.

The membership of the SAG and IDC is integral to ensuring critical considerations and requirements are identified and discussed. The membership of these groups is listed in Appendix 1.

The SAG primarily:

- provides independent advice to government on environmental, social and economic costs and benefits for businesses and community members
- provides advice to government on potential legislative provisions to help inform the design of a ban on the supply of single-use plastic items, recognising that the timing for the commencement of a ban needs to be realistic to allow for community and businesses to adjust to the new approach
- provides necessary information relevant to a preliminary cost/benefit assessment of options
- assists in the formation of technical working groups or consultation forums, as needed
- identifies, where relevant, areas of national consistency and work of other jurisdictions to help inform messaging and the design of the provisions
- provides advice on communication to businesses, the community and other stakeholders, including information about suitable alternatives.

The IDC provides strategic advice to help inform the development of legislation to ban the supply of specific single-use plastic items. It includes representatives from Queensland Government departments to ensure a whole-of-government perspective is considered.

The SAG and IDC are consulted through in-person and digital meetings and continue to provide advice on the approaches necessary through to the implementation of an agreed option.

Public consultation

Public consultation was supported with a communications campaign, commencing with a media launch at Eat Street Northshore on 13 March 2020 by the Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP, Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science, and Minister for the Arts. The primary aim of the campaign was to raise awareness of the proposed ban and encourage Queensland households, businesses and industry to provide feedback on it.

Campaign information was distributed through social media, Spotify, newspapers, media, electronic direct mail and websites and concluded on 30 April 2020.

Figure 1. Campaign material examples.

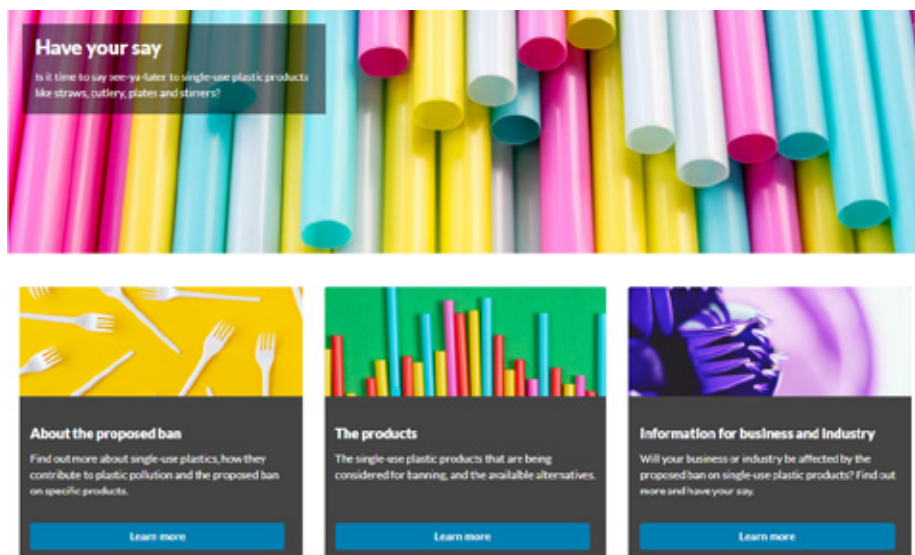
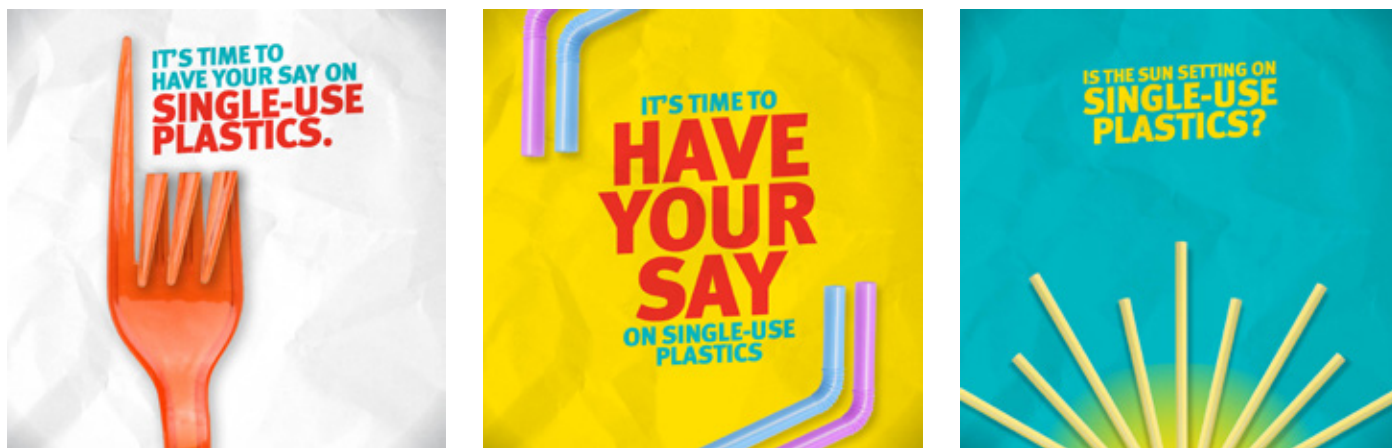


Figure 2. The campaign website housed three (3) content pages and links to the survey.



Information about the proposed ban, the CRIS and the Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan were featured on the Queensland Government’s Get Involved website.

An online survey was used to seek feedback on the proposed ban, as well as plastic waste and pollution, the proposed timeline, exemptions, voluntary action, extending the ban to other single-use products and whether people had already taken actions to reduce plastic waste. The survey questions are provided in Appendix 2.

Figure 3: A full colour, half-page press advertisement was published in the early general news section of state-wide and major regional newspaper publications on Saturday 14 March 2020 (see Table 1).



Table 1: Newspapers used to promote the consultation.

Courier Mail
Cairns Post
Townsville Bulletin
Gold Coast Bulletin
Gympie Times
Sunshine Coast Daily
Toowoomba Chronicle
Mt Isa North West Star
Mackay Daily Mercury
Rockhampton Morning Bulletin
Gladstone Observer
Bundaberg News Mail
Warwick Daily News
Ipswich Qld Times
Fraser Coast Chronicle

Results and analysis of the consultation

The proposed introduction of legislation to ban the supply of single-use plastic products is overwhelmingly supported across all sectors—94 per cent support from a total of 19,622 submissions. Targeted feedback from stakeholder groups strongly identified the ban needed to consider specific disability and healthcare needs.

Targeted consultation

Feedback received from the SAG was supportive, provided key impacts are addressed. A summary of the key responses identified through discussions and meetings is outlined in the following themes:

Healthcare/disability needs

- General consensus of members was positive, provided that there is adequate lead time for the implementation of the ban and that healthcare and disability needs were recognised and addressed. Similar to the single-use lightweight plastic shopping bag ban, six months was thought to be a reasonable minimum timeframe for implementation.
- Availability of straws was the main concern for the disability community. Current straw alternatives (such as paper or metal) are not generally fit-for-purpose and the proposed ban must recognise the impact on people with disability and ensure that proposed bans are inclusive.
- Any proposed ban must have an education and awareness campaign to ensure that retailers and the public are educated on the human element of single-use plastic use and to ensure that those with a disability are not marginalised.

National consistency and definition/scope

- Emphasis was for the legislative bans to be consistent, where possible, across jurisdictions. It was recognised that there is broader work being undertaken on single-use plastics nationally and there may be benefit in holding a national forum to discuss these issues with national peak bodies and all jurisdictions.
- Regarding the definition of plastic items included in the ban, seeking it to relate to products that are single-use and not all plastics; to exclude plastics that are certifiable compostable to Australian Standards, and include mouldable polymers to ensure that not all plastics are incorporated.
- The importance of acknowledging the additional difficulties associated with the disposal of compostable products was reiterated and the requirement for clear package labelling to ensure that items do not have adverse impacts in their end of life (i.e. compostable products being thrown into the recycling stream or ending up in a home compost system which does not have the appropriate anaerobic conditions for biodegradability).
- It was also recommended that single-use items be prescribed within the legislation and/or explanatory notes to provide clarity on which items are included and excluded.
- Suggestion for the use of a term such as ‘foodware’ which could be used to encompass single-use products proposed to be banned.

- It was agreed that the proposed ban should apply to manufacturers, suppliers and retailers to ensure the whole supply chain is captured, including imported products.
- It was raised that exclusions for single-use items that are integral to the packaging of a product may discourage voluntary changes to packaging to reduce plastic waste. It was agreed the inclusion of a signal within the explanatory notes that these products may be included in future bans may assist to provide an increased incentive to industry.
- With regard to the Queensland Government objective for the proposed ban as outlined in the CRIS, there was a call to ensure that criteria and objectives be established to ensure that progress can be measured.

Voluntary action

- The acknowledgement of voluntary work being undertaken, as a result of consumer demand, by many stakeholder members around single-use plastics and sustainability broadly, with many retailers and food service businesses already phasing out the sale or supply of single-use plastic straws. A number of major quick-service restaurants have also phased out polystyrene takeaway food containers.

Education and awareness

- The importance of a campaign to business and industry to facilitate a smooth transition. This education campaign should educate and provide awareness on items that can be avoided and suitable alternatives for items, with reference to ‘fit-for-purpose items’ for health and disability uses.
- It was recommended that retailers and the community be educated on single-use plastic alternatives and how to properly dispose of them.



Communications campaign results

The communications campaign results demonstrate that public consultation was highly effective in raising awareness with the campaign reaching 5,003,916 people through social media, 980,197 people through Spotify and in excess of 897,560 people through print media.

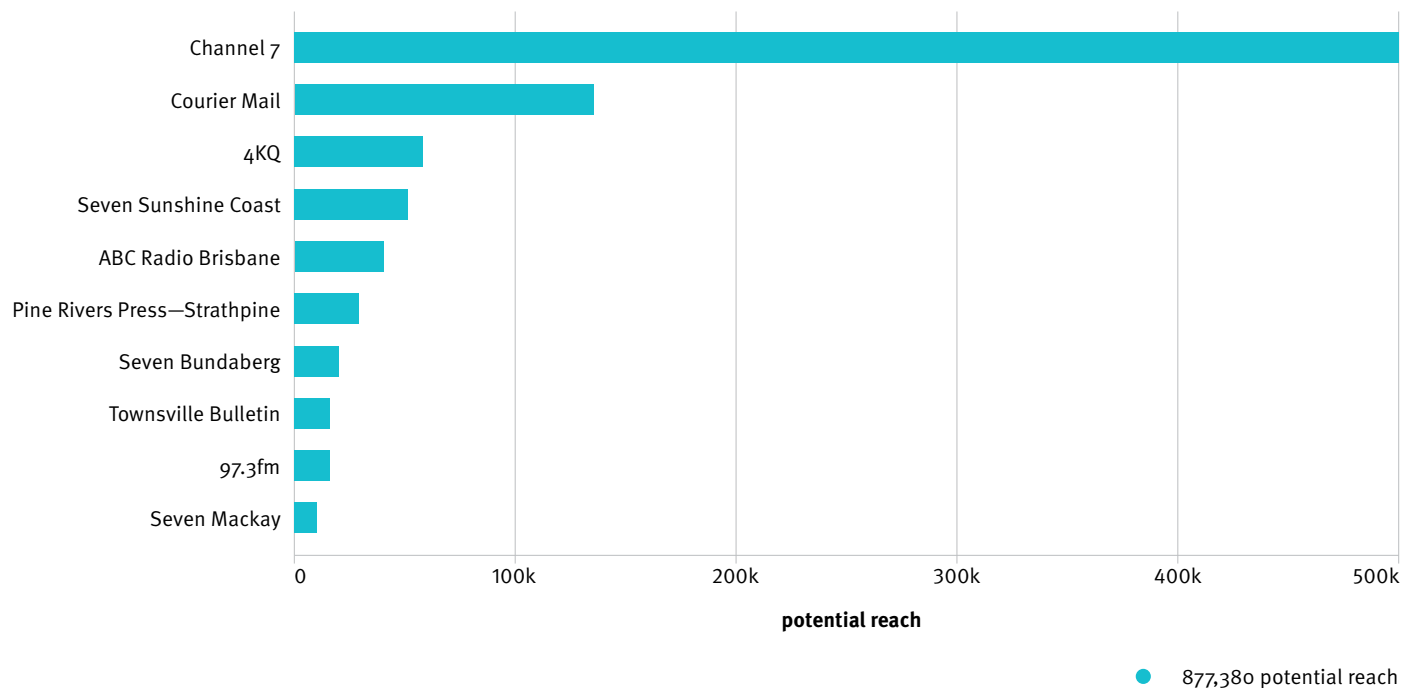
Smart Services Queensland (SSQ) was engaged to manage enquiries, if required; however all information needs were adequately met through the campaign with only one enquiry received through SSQ.

Social media was used to promote awareness and drive traffic to the website, with Facebook and Instagram delivering a total of 4,974,095 impressions and 55,196 clicks through to the website. The social media activity resulted in over 3,000 comments being posted.

Awareness of the message delivered through Spotify delivered a total of 980,197 impressions and 937 clicks through to the website. The website recorded 89,477 page views, 40,072 visitors to the website were new users. Interest in the Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan resulted in 180 downloads of the document, with 246 downloads of the CRIS.

The campaign launch on 13 March 2020 attracted a high level of media coverage. The campaign was supported by the release of two media statements and one media interview on television from Channel 7 on 23 April 2020. Throughout the consultation period, there were 28 media mentions with the highest volume achieved through social networks, television and online. A list of media clips is provided in Appendix 3.

Figure 4. The top ten media outlets reporting on the consultation.



Public consultation and feedback

The public consultation resulted in high participation levels, with 19,622 submissions received: 18,942 through the online survey and 680 written submissions through email and post.

Consultation feedback further stated that the proposal to introduce the ban is an excellent decision for the Queensland Government to make and this shows great leadership. Many responses identified that the problem is everyone's responsibility and this is the right thing to do. Feedback indicated that plastic use needs to be reduced and that everyone needs to reduce plastic litter. Further comments discussed the convenience of single-use plastic items has driven an increase in their use and that everyone needs to be educated and get used to life without single-use plastic products.

Introduction and timing of a proposed ban

In relation to the introduction and timing of a proposed ban, the feedback overwhelming (94 per cent of the 19,622 submissions) supported the introduction of the ban. The proposed start date of 1 July 2021 was also strongly supported with 90 per cent of people considering this date provided sufficient time for individuals and business to prepare for the introduction of the ban.

Consideration of exemptions of a ban

A key consideration for the inclusion of exemptions to meet people's healthcare and disability needs, as highlighted by stakeholder advisory groups, was also supported in the feedback received through the public consultation.

Over three quarters (78 per cent) of responses received through the online survey supported exemptions which allow the continued provision of straws through registered businesses (for example, pharmacies, doctors surgeries and dental clinics) (51 per cent) or allowing cafes, markets, restaurants and events to provide these on request (27 per cent).

The consideration for exemptions where products are a part of shelf-ready packed products (for example, a juice box with an attached plastic straw or a yoghurt with an attached plastic spoon under the lid) were strongly opposed by people responding to the online survey, with 70 per cent of people not supporting exemptions for this purpose.

Almost one third of respondents stated that a switch away from single-use plastic products will be encouraged through the use of alternative, environmentally friendly options which negate the need for exemptions that allow continued supply of single-use plastic products.

Impacts of a proposed ban

There were no negative impacts expressed through the public consultation in relation to a proposed ban of single-use plastic items, with the impact on the environment the key reason identified for supporting a ban of specified single-use plastic items. Variations within the theme for protecting the environment were identified as the key benefit of banning single-use plastic products.

Table 2. Percentage of themed responses of impacts for a proposed ban of single-use plastic items.

Percentage	Identified impact
34%	Damaging our environment/environmental disaster/terrible impact on the environment/protect our Great Barrier Reef
24%	Need to preserve our wildlife/damaging our wildlife
17%	Need to preserve our marine life/damaging our marine life
9%	Destroying our oceans/being dumped in our oceans/our oceans are a disgrace
7%	Future—for our children's sake/for the future of our planet/to protect the Earth and oceans for generations to come
3%	Littering our beautiful beaches/litter everywhere

Alternatives to single-use plastic products

Public feedback indicated support for the use of alternative environmentally friendly options in preference to single-use plastic items. Consideration of recyclable options and items that meet Australian standards with 100 per cent commercially compostable packaging was raised through the public consultation.

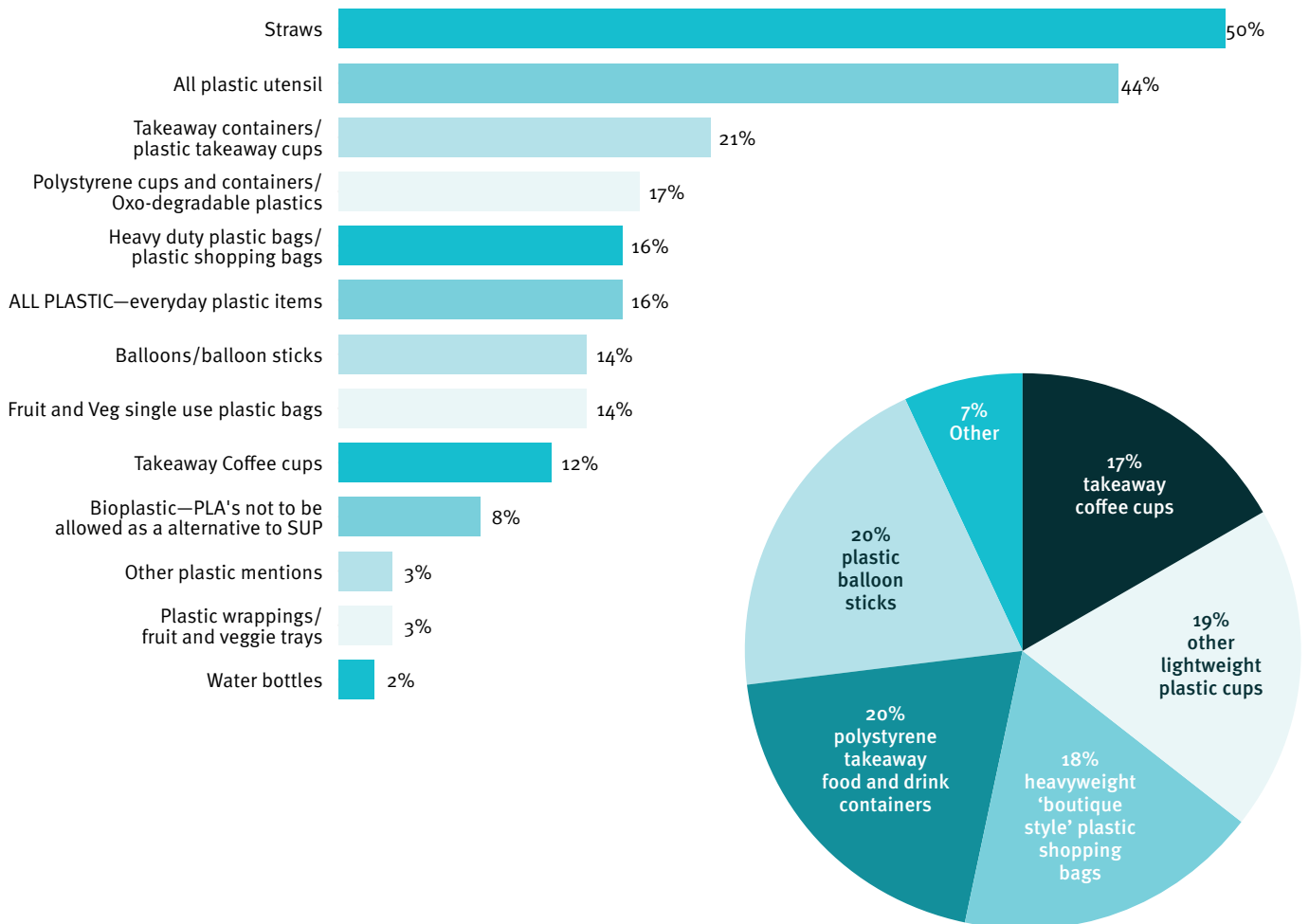
Considerations of extending bans to other single-use plastic products

There is strong support for a range of single-use plastic products to be banned from supply in Queensland. There was not a significant variation or preference between plastic balloon sticks, other lightweight plastic cups, polystyrene takeaway food and drink containers, oxo-degradable plastics, takeaway coffee cups and heavyweight 'boutique style' plastic bags.

Straws and plastic utensils were the products which received the strongest support to ban, further reinforcing the support for the proposed introduction of the ban of these products.

This feedback indicates community support for extending the ban of supply of a broad range of other single-use plastic items.

Figure 5a. Graph: Email responses supporting extending a ban of supply for single-use plastic items.
Figure 5b. Pie chart: Survey respondents supporting extending a ban for other single-use plastic items.

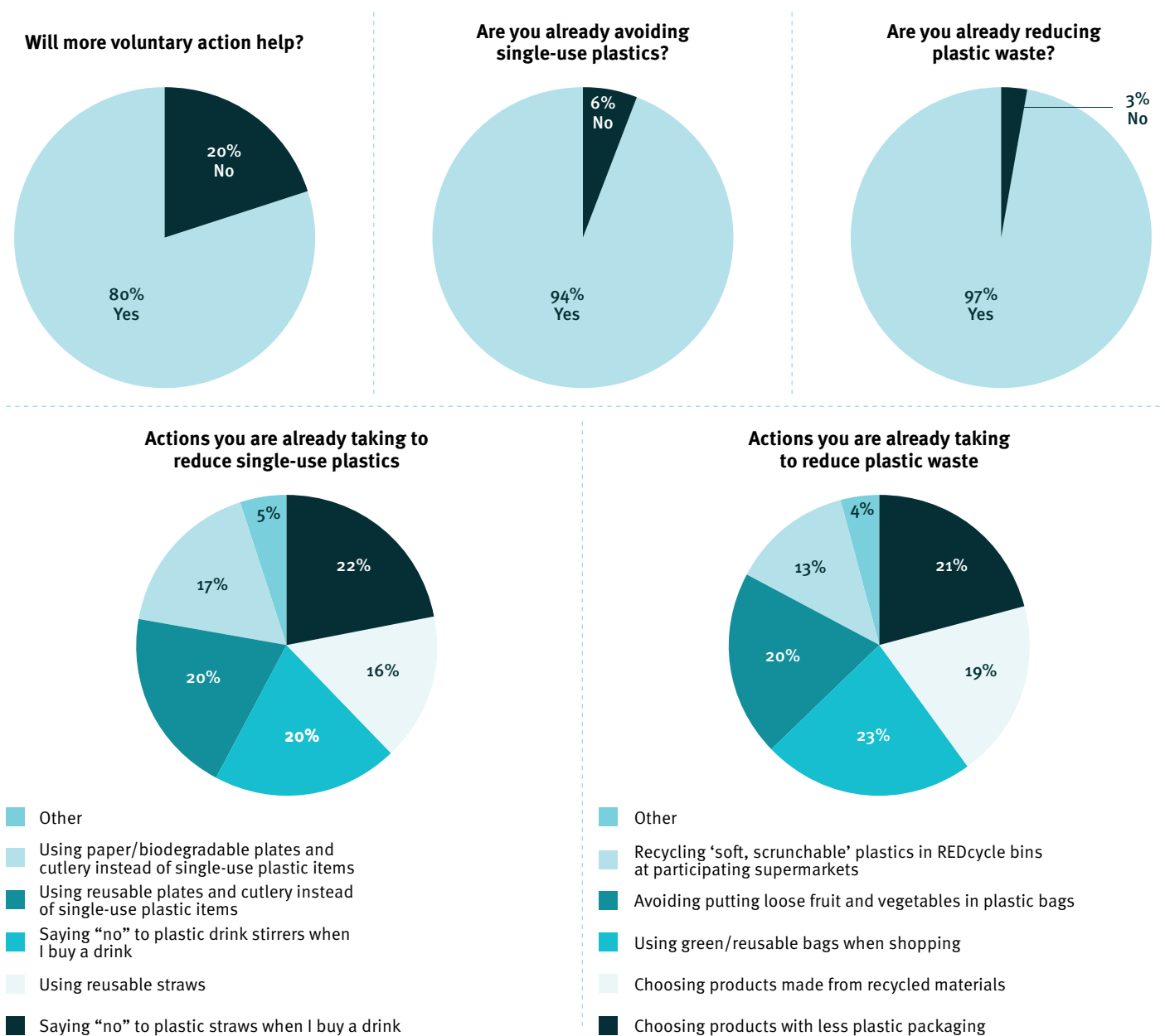


Voluntary actions

Some respondents indicated that education was the key factor to implementing a ban. More voluntary action is strongly supported with most respondents already taking actions to reduce single-use plastic items and plastic waste. Eighty per cent of people supported the need for voluntary actions, through active educational campaigns that will increase awareness of the impacts on single-use plastics in the environment and help reduce plastic pollution. Further support for voluntary actions included the need to educate public and business on the ban to facilitate retail acceptance and compliance.

Feedback indicated that voluntary actions being taken were already high, with 94 per cent of people responding to the survey already avoiding single-use plastics and 97 per cent of people already reducing plastic waste through a range of positive behaviours and actions.

Figure 6 Levels of support for more voluntary action and already occurring.



Comments received through the consultation process

Clarification comments received include:

“The Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) supports the Queensland Government’s initiative to address the impacts of single-use plastic products. Overall, AFGC supports the CRIS as it aligns closely with the aims and objectives of the National Packaging Targets and the National Waste Policy Action Plan and supports the findings and recommendations of several single-use plastics working groups AFGC has participated in.”

“AFGC supports increased consistent national education messages that highlight the impact of irresponsible disposal of packaging on the environment and messages that change community perception that packaging is a resource and not a waste material. In doing so, recovery can be increased and contamination minimised, resulting in increased recycling rates that will enable greater recycled content in packaging, hence stimulating a circular economy.”

“The Australian Retailers Association looks forward to ongoing collaboration with the department on its Tackling Plastic Waste, Queensland’s Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan to successfully reduce plastic waste from supply chains within a reasonable timeframe.”

“The Australian Retailers Association welcomes the opportunity to engage with the department on how we can support any future awareness-raising initiatives to facilitate retail acceptance and compliance.”

“Out of the 4 options assessed in the CRIS (status-quo, a legislated ban on single-use plastic items, greater education and awareness raising and additional litter collection and clean up infrastructure), a ban on single-use plastic items would be the most effective,” national supermarket chain.

“By taking decisive action on a small number of high profile single-use plastic items where, with the exception of straws, there are relatively few complications, the Queensland Government will help to drive behaviour change. As the behaviour change becomes embedded, it will be possible to take on more challenging single-use plastic items,” Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation.

“We support the proposed ban on these single-use items (subject to the timescales and exemptions detailed below), as sustainable alternatives are readily available,” national supermarket chain.

“The National Retail Association supports the government’s review of single-use plastic and is also supportive of the aim of reducing the impact of litter on our natural environment.”

“As outlined in the CRIS, the National Retail Association are currently developing and gaining support for a National Voluntary Industry Code of Practice for Sustainable Shopping Bags in conjunction with state governments across Australia, APCO and the Meeting of Environment Ministers.”

“UnitingCare strongly supports exemptions to allow the provision of single-use flexible plastic straws for people with a disability or healthcare need. It is the view of UnitingCare that the therapeutic needs of these groups can be met by an exemption allowing the supply of single-use plastic straws to health-affiliated businesses including hospitals, aged care providers, pharmacies, medical practices, and dental clinics. This exemption should also allow for over-the-counter sale at those locations with retail functions (pharmacies, medical practices, and dental clinics). UnitingCare anticipates that the impacts of the proposed ban on our organisation and clients will be minimal and manageable, provided that the aforementioned exemptions are in place.”

“Implementation of the ban will make a small but important contribution to reducing the environmental impact of single-use plastics, including reducing plastic pollution on our oceans. It is estimated that 8 million tonnes of plastic leak into our oceans every year, equal to a dump truck a minute. These plastics cause injury or death to marine animals and can also concentrate and transport harmful chemicals,” Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation.

“The Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia (WMRR) supports the government’s actions in not prescribing alternative products or their use, exclusions in areas such as disability and healthcare, and the requirement on wholesale and manufacturer suppliers to ensure there is clear labelling of alternative products in relation to the compostability of the item. Broadly, WMRR supports the labelling of products to help consumers understand how to recycle or dispose of a product, as well as a label that indicates which products are made from Australian recycled material.”

“Public education campaigns are critical to addressing problematic waste streams and informing consumers of their choices, the impacts of their choices and proper disposal behaviour,” Woolworths.

Conclusion

The targeted and public consultation found that there is strong support for the proposed introduction of the legislation to ban the supply of single-use plastic items, starting with straws, stirrers, plates and cutlery. As such the Queensland Government is seeking to introduce this legislation to ban in 2020.

Implementation and evaluation of preferred option

The Queensland Government will continue to engage with stakeholders to develop an implementation plan. This will involve working with stakeholders to address key issues highlighted through the targeted consultation process, and develop education and awareness messages and materials to facilitate the implementation of the ban.

The Queensland Government will lead by example in having Queensland Government sponsored events move to eliminate these items ahead of the ban commencing.

The Queensland Government will also continue to support the expansion of Plastic Free Places, a community-based program aimed at phasing-out single-use plastics in community precincts.

The single-use lightweight plastic bag ban provides a successful framework for engagement and compliance—working with peak bodies to raise awareness and promote the ban as a proactive means to reducing enforcement activities.

Proposed amendments to the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* will provide the legislative authority to introduce bans, with much of the detail proposed for regulation amendment. The amendments provide for additional items to be prescribed in regulation following a consultation process.

Enforcement action, if required, is administered through the department's Environmental Services and Regulation (ESR) division. Enforcement action may be undertaken through site audits, fines or other appropriate penalties.

The legislation introducing the ban will be reviewed two years after its commencement in order to evaluate the efficacy of the ban in meeting the objectives of reducing single-use plastic usage and litter.

Litter audits are the key mechanism to establish a baseline and measure efficacy of the ban. However, other measures will include consultation with businesses to assess the efficacy on the social and economic impacts of the ban. Collectively, these measures over time will be used to assess the progress towards the objective of a 20 per cent reduction in the plastic pollution from these items by 2023.

Appendix 1: Consultation details

Targeted consultation

Table 3: Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) representing members across industry and the commercial sectors (in alphabetic order).

Australian Food and Grocery Council	Boomerang Alliance
Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland	Council on The Ageing Queensland
Local Government Association of Queensland	Master Grocers Association
National Retail Association	Queensland Disability Advisory Council
Queensland Hotels Association	Queensland Tourism Industry Council
Restaurant and Catering Industry Association of Australia	World Wildlife Fund

Table 4: Queensland Inter-departmental Committee members (department name at time of committee formation, in alphabetic order).

Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors	Department of Corrective Services
Department of Education (Early Childhood)	Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
Department of Environment and Science (host)	Department of Health
Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development	Department of Justice and Attorney-General (Fair Trading)
Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Queensland Treasury

Submission details

A total of 680 submissions were received from a range of sectors as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Submissions received by stakeholder category.

Sector	N = 680 (email/post submissions)
Individual community members	635
Environmental non-government organisation/charity	18
Commercial business	9
Peak body	8
Community organisation	5
Government	4
Academia	1



Appendix 2: Context

Questions from the government engagement online survey

- Question 1. Do you support the proposed ban on single-use plastic straws, cutlery, plates and stirrers?
- Question 2. Do you think a 1 July 2021 start date provides sufficient time for individuals and businesses to prepare for a proposed ban?
- Question 3. Do you support the proposal to provide exemptions for single-use plastic items that are part of a shelf-ready packaged product (for example, a juice box with an attached plastic straw or a tuna salad with an included fork)?
- Question 4. What types of exemptions may be needed to support people with disability or healthcare needs?
- allow cafes, markets, restaurants and events to provide plastic straws, on request, as needed
 - allow registered businesses (for example, pharmacies, doctors' surgeries and dental clinics) to continue to provide straws to people
 - other (please specify).
- Question 5. What do you think are the main positive and negative impacts for consumers, businesses and the environment from banning certain single-use plastics, starting with straws, stirrers, plates and cutlery?
- Question 6. Do you think more voluntary action (such as educational campaigns that increase awareness of the impacts of single-use plastics in the environment) will help to reduce plastic pollution?
- Question 7. Are you already avoiding and/or using more sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic straws, cutlery, plates and/or stirrers?
- Question 8. Are you already taking steps to reduce your plastic waste?
- Question 9. Do you think other single-use plastic products should be banned? (tick the products you think should be banned from supply in Queensland)
- takeaway coffee cups
 - other lightweight plastic cups
 - heavyweight 'boutique style' plastic shopping bags
 - polystyrene takeaway food and drink containers
 - plastic balloon sticks
 - Other (please specify).

Appendix 3: Media clips

13 March 2020

Plastic straws face state ban—Courier Mail

The last straw: Palaszczuk Government proposes sweeping plastics ban—Townsville Bulletin

The Courier Mail reports Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk is set to ban plastic...—97.3fm

Anastacia Palaszczuk, Queensland Premier, is set to ban plastic straws, plates and cutlery in QLD—4KQ

Plastic straws, plates, and cutlery could be banned as Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk is...—4KQ

Southern Downs leads the way on sustainability ahead of the ban—Warwick Daily News

Qld is taking the next phase in prohibiting single-use plastics—Channel 7 (4:30pm)

Qld is taking the next phase in prohibiting single-use plastics—Channel 7 (6:30pm)

16 March 2020

Queenslanders to decide the future of single-use plastics—My Sunshine Coast

19 March 2020

State plastic ban—Pine River Press

15 April 2020

How more than 1500 Queenslanders feel about plastic straw ban—Brisbane Times

16 April 2020

Survey on plastics ban extended—Townsville Bulletin

