

# Plastic bag ban in Queensland gets green light as cash-for-cans scheme introduced

By Gail Burke 6 Sep 2017

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-06/plastic-bags-banned-in-queensland-cash-for-cans-and-bottles/8876620>

**Photo:** Retailers who flout the laws face up to a \$3,000 fine. (612 ABC Brisbane: Jessica Hinchliffe)

Queensland shoppers will no longer be able to get plastic bags at the supermarket but will be able to cash in their cans and bottles under laws passed overnight.

The ban on single-use plastic shopping bags, including degradable and biodegradable bags, will take effect from mid-next year.

The bill was passed with bipartisan support, with the Opposition saying it had initially proposed the changes.



Environment Minister Steven Miles said some retailers were proactively banning the supply of lightweight plastic shopping bags in advance of the ban.

Retailers who flout the laws face up to a \$3,000 fine.

Designated container refund points and reverse vending machines will offer 10 cents for most drink containers between 150ml and three litres.

Some containers, such as those for milk, wine, and some juice are exempt.



**Photo:** Your bottles and cans don't have to be sparkling clean to go in the recycling bin. (Pixabay)

Mr Miles said some of the most passionate advocates for the change had been children.

"I get letters every day from school kids around the state," he said.

**"By passing this bill we say to our young people that we value our wildlife, especially our marine creatures like turtles, sea birds and dugongs."**

"An estimated 2.4 billion beverage containers and 1 billion lightweight plastic shopping bags are used in Queensland every year ... these are ending up in our waterways and killing and maiming our native animals."

Opposition environment spokesman Christian Rowan agreed.

"This is an important initiative for our environment, for conservation, for community organisations, for waste reduction and recycling and for jobs here in Queensland," he said.

The Queensland Conservation Council's Dr Tim Seelig said it was a breakthrough moment for the state.

**Photo:** One of the 'reverse vending machines' for container deposit refunds. (ABC News: Chris O'Brien)

"We do hope that this legislation will be the starting point of a much bigger conversation about how much we really need to use plastics on a day-to-day basis," he said.

Waste Recycling Industry Association Queensland chief executive Rick Ralph said the new scheme would be particularly welcomed in remote and regional areas that had very limited access to recycling.



**"The next time we think about throwing away our drink containers we can think again, knowing there's a better way, and now we're paid to do it!"**

South Australia and the Northern Territory have operated refund schemes for a number of years and New South Wales is due to commence a similar scheme at the end of this year.

Mr Miles said the State Government would continue to work closely with beverage manufacturers, retailers, local government, the waste and resource recovery industry, and the community to ensure a smooth transition to the plastic bag ban.



**Photo:** Designated container refund points and reverse vending machines will offer 10 cents for most drink containers. (ABC News: Chris O'Brien)