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RTI Act 2009

# Department of Environment and Science.
# Waste Levy Research.

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[illegible] 2009

6th September 2018

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# Research Overview.

**Objective:** The overall objective was to gather insights into the perceptions, attitudes and understanding the community and businesses have towards the proposed waste levy, waste handling and recycling in Queensland.

**Outcomes:** The findings will help guide an education campaign to increase awareness of waste management issues and the proactive work being done in Queensland, and improve community engagement.

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## *Community Research*

- Online survey with n=1,212 residents
- 10 minutes
- Regions: South East Queensland (n=290), South Queensland (n=122), Central Queensland (n=400), North Queensland (n=400)
- *Results have been weighted based on the Australian population statistics using age, gender and region*

## *Business Research*

- Online survey with n=180 businesses
- 10 minutes
- Regions: South East Queensland (n=42), South Queensland (n=18), Central Queensland (n=60), North Queensland (n=60)
- *All businesses have been allocated a weight of 1*

# Three quarters of Queenslanders are concerned about the State's environmental situation and waste management.

Businesses are significantly less concerned about the environment and waste management than the community.

| | Total Queensland | Community | Businesses |
|---|---|---|---|
| | n=1,392 | n=1,212 | n=180 |
| Level of concern about Queensland's environmental situation | 75% | 78% ↑ | 50% ↓ |
| Level of concern about waste management | 76% | 78% | 61% ↓ |

> *"More recycling needs to be done and less plastics being produced."*

> *"I don't think we do enough to manage our waste for the future. We need to put in place ways that are long lasting and restrict the use of items that are not biodegradable and ways to use the waste to make other items, fuel and power."*

> *"We recycle a lot of material, but we don't have the capacity to do more. We need to look into it. We have a big volume of waste in our industry and that needs to be addressed."*

↑ *Significantly higher compared to total result.*
↓ *Significantly lower compared to total result.*

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# Queenslanders are also concerned about litter and illegal dumping.

Businesses are more concerned about this, and are also more aware that it is illegal and carries a fine.

| | Total Queensland | Community | Businesses |
|---|---|---|---|
| | n=1,392 | n=1,212 | n=180 |
| Concerned about litter and illegal dumping | 71% | 69% | 82% ↑ |
| Aware litter and illegal dumping is illegal | 69% | 66% | 87% ↑ |
| Aware litter and illegal dumping carries a fine | 66% | 64% | 81% ↑ |

> *"Places look dirty with rubbish on the kerb and dumping rubbish for someone else to clean up is unfair and disgusting."*

> *"I don't like It when they dump it illegally. It harms the environment and it's an eye sore."*

> *"It could be harmful if the rubbish was left sitting there. What if kids started to play with it or wild animals had access to it."*

↑ *Significantly higher compared to total result.*
↓ *Significantly lower compared to total result.*

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# Queenslanders agree that all parties can do more to better manage waste.

Businesses are less likely to believe business, industry and government could find better ways to manage waste, but are more likely to believe that households could be doing better.

| | Total Queensland | Community | Businesses |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Agreement with Finding Better Ways to Manage Waste** | n=1,392 | n=1,212 | n=180 |
| State Government | **93%** | 94% | 87% ↓ |
| Local Council | **91%** | 92% | 84% ↓ |
| Federal Government | **92%** | 93% | 84% ↓ |
| Businesses and Industries | **93%** | 94% | 83% ↓ |
| Your Household/Other Households | **75%** | 74% | 83% ↑ |

↑ *Significantly higher compared to total result.*
↓ *Significantly lower compared to total result.*

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# The majority of Queenslanders are taking steps to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and believe it is important to work towards eliminating landfill waste.

| | Total Queensland | Community | Businesses |
|---|---|---|---|
| | n=1,392 | n=1,212 | n=180 |
| Currently taking steps to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill | **87%** | 87% | 83% |
| Importance of minimising / eliminating landfill waste | **85%** | 85% | 86% |

## Key Behaviours by the Community

Households are most likely to be doing the following to reduce their waste:

- Recycling
- Compost/organics in the garden
- Donating items
- Avoiding plastic packaging and products

## Factors Impacting on Doing More

Households in particular believe the following impact on their ability to do more to reduce waste and improve recycling efforts:

- Access (lack of facilities)
- Cost
- Availability of information
- Convenience

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# However, many Queenslanders are reluctant to make further changes regarding waste management. Some provided suggestions for helping to encourage more change.

**Drivers of Behaviour Change:**

- More / better recycling facilities and services
- More education
- Government sponsored initiatives, incentives from the Government, 'Return and Earn' schemes etc.
- Reduce the cost of disposing
- More / better waste facilities and services

> *"No fee days at landfills for certain types of waste would be a good incentive."*

> *"More education. If I knew of more ways to reduce waste then I would be interested in trying them."*

> *"Seeing different sorts of strategies in place to enable and see better usage of resources and the disposal of resources."*

> *"Incentives would increase compliance or stricter regulations."*

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# Around 3 in 5 Queenslanders support the reintroduction of the Waste Disposal Levy.

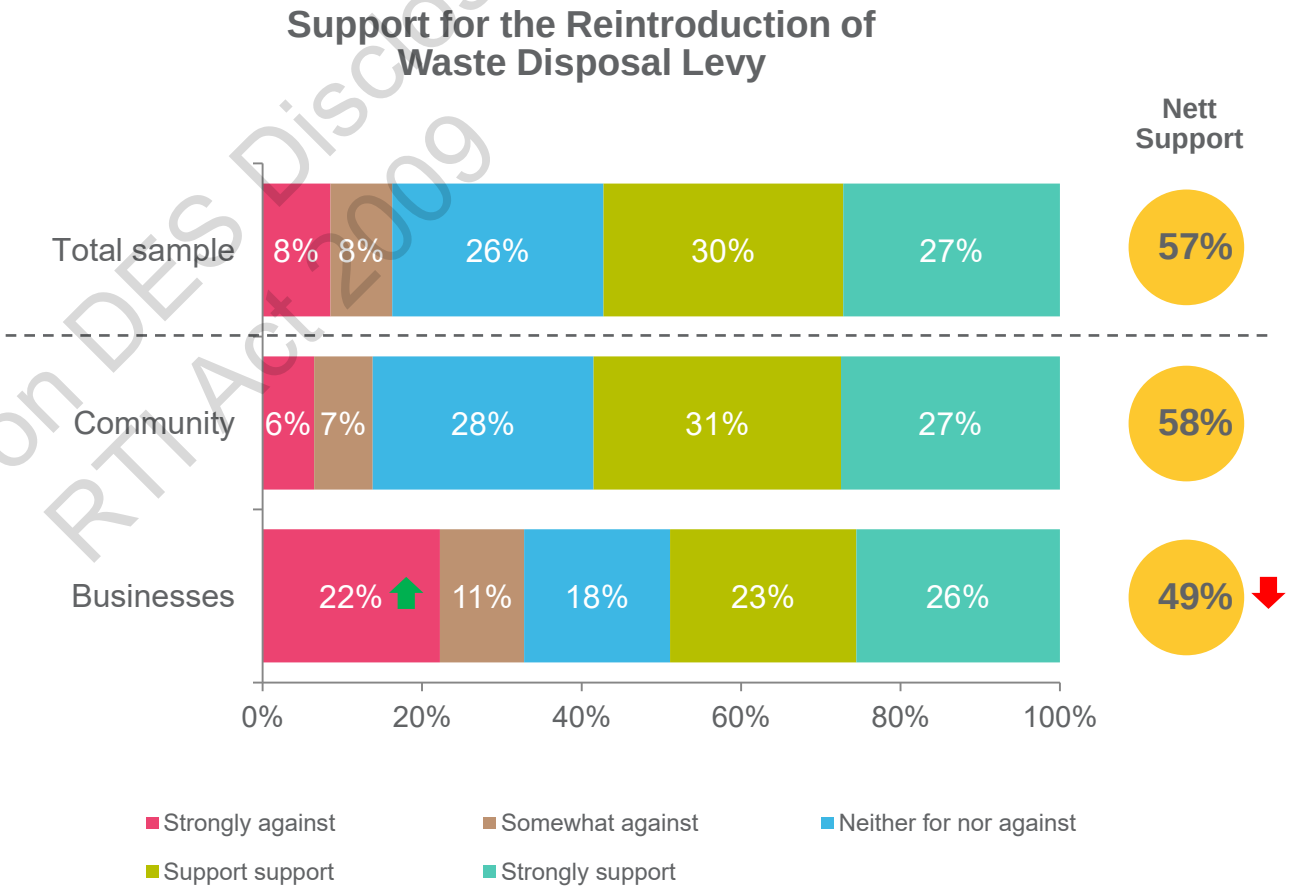
However, support for the levy is lower amongst businesses (49%), with 22% being strongly against it.

**Drivers of Support:**

- Helping the environment
- Reducing waste/landfill
- Being less wasteful
- A feeling of needing to take action/ do better

**Areas of Concern:**

- Predominantly about potential costs
- Some businesses feel it is unfair on them

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*Significantly higher compared to total result.*
*Significantly lower compared to total result.*

# Although 2 in 5 Queenslanders don't support the levy, the majority consider the outcomes of it to be highly important.

Businesses consider a number of outcomes to be slightly more important than the community, in particular supporting / creating new industries that manufacture products using recycled content.

| | Total Queensland | Community | Businesses |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Nett Importance of Levy Outcome (Top 6 Shown)** | n=1,392 | n=1,212 | n=180 |
| Supporting / creating new industries that manufacture products using recycled content | **86%** | 85% | 92% ↑ |
| Providing long term waste management benefits to Queensland | **85%** | 84% | 89% |
| Making material that is currently disposed of more attractive for alternative solutions/uses | **85%** | 85% | 88% |
| Increasing the levels of recycling in the State | **84%** | 83% | 89% |
| Providing a disincentive to the practice of interstate waste being sent over our border for dumping here | **83%** | 83% | 83% |
| Addressing our environmental issues | **82%** | 82% | 83% |

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↑ *Significantly higher compared to total result.*
↓ *Significantly lower compared to total result.*

# At a community level, key results differ amongst younger and older residents.

| | All Community | 18-35 years | 56+ years |
|---|---|---|---|
| | n=1,212 | n=407 | n=406 |
| Level of concern about Queensland's environmental situation | **78%** | 75% | 80% |
| Level of concern about waste management | **78%** | 73% ↓ | 83% ↑ |
| Currently taking steps to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill | **87%** | 76% ↓ | 96% ↑ |
| Factors that inhibit waste reduction / recycling efforts: | | | |
| *Access (lack of facilities)* | **57%** | 61% | 53% |
| *Cost* | **44%** | 57% ↑ | 27% ↓ |
| *Convenience* | **45%** | 62% ↑ | 29% ↓ |
| Importance of minimising / eliminating landfill waste | **85%** | 86% | 88% |
| Level of concern about litter and illegal dumping | **69%** | 62% ↓ | 84% ↑ |
| Support for the reintroduction of the Waste Disposal Levy | **58%** | 51% ↓ | 69% ↑ |

↑ *Significantly higher compared to total Community result.*
↓ *Significantly lower compared to total Community result.*

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# Amongst businesses, there are a few regional differences to be mindful of.

**North QLD Businesses:**

- More likely to consider a number of outcomes of the waste levy to be important.

**Central QLD Businesses:**

- More concerned about Queensland's environmental situation and waste management.
- More likely to believe a number of factors inhibit their ability to reduce their waste and improve recycling, particularly access (lack of facilities) and availability of information.
- More likely to be aware that littering and illegal dumping is illegal and individuals can be fined.

**SEQ Businesses:**

- More likely to consider minimising and eliminating waste going to landfills to be important.
- Less likely to consider a number of outcomes of the waste levy to be important.

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# The Communications Plan will need to consider these key differences amongst the community and businesses.

Messaging, drivers and barriers to behaviour change and channel preferences also vary amongst the community (including between younger and older members) and businesses.

These attributes also contribute to which groups will be easier or harder to target:

- **EASIEST:** Older residents aged 56+ years
- **MODERATE:** Younger residents aged 18-35 years
- **HARDEST:** Businesses

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# Communications Plan.

## OLDER RESIDENTS (56+ YEARS)

| Difficulty | Education Campaign Focus | Drivers | Barriers | Preferred Channels |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Easiest group to target | Two key angles to communicate:<br><br>How the levy will improve the environment<br><br>How the levy will help improve the future of Queensland | Higher level of concern about the environment, how waste is managed in Queensland and litter / illegal dumping<br><br>More attuned to waste management and strongly support the waste levy's introduction<br><br>Focus on the following highly important outcomes:<br>• Providing a disincentive to the practice of interstate waste being sent over the border for dumping in Queensland<br>• Providing long term waste management benefits to Queensland<br>• Supporting / creating new industries that manufacture products using recycled content | More likely to not believe they can find better ways to manage waste<br><br>Still have some concerns about perceived costs being passed onto households | TV<br><br>Local Councils |

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# Communications Plan (cont.).

## YOUNGER RESIDENTS (18-35 YEARS)

| Difficulty | Education Campaign Focus | Drivers | Barriers | Preferred Channels |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Moderately difficult – higher proportion who feel neutral towards the levy | Two staged approach:<br><br>Raise awareness of the waste management issues in Queensland<br><br>Communicate the benefits the levy will have on Queensland | Majority believe they could find ways to better manage waste – but they lack awareness and understanding about what to do and why<br><br>Communicate the bigger picture of the waste management issues in Queensland<br><br>They consider the following outcomes to be most important:<br><br>• Addressing our environmental issues<br>• Increasing the levels of recycling in the State<br>• Providing long term waste management benefits to Queensland | More likely to believe multiple factors inhibit their ability to reduce their waste<br><br>Less concerned about litter and illegal dumping<br><br>Less likely to believe that almost all of the outcomes of the levy are important<br><br>Some concern about perceived costs that will be passed onto the community | TV<br><br>Social media |

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# Communications Plan (cont.).

## BUSINESSES

| Difficulty | Education Campaign Focus | Drivers | Barriers | Preferred Channels |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hardest group to target | Primary: How the levy will benefit businesses<br><br>Secondary:<br><br>Make businesses more accountable for their own waste management and recycling efforts<br><br>Provide advice on initiatives and actions for businesses to do more | Focus on the following highly important outcomes:<br><br>• Supporting / creating new industries that manufacture products using recycled content<br>• Creating new jobs / products / businesses in the associated industries<br>• Increasing the levels of recycling in the State<br>• Making material that is currently disposed of more attractive for alternative solutions/ uses<br>• Helping support our economy and jobs for the future<br><br>The environmental benefits should be a secondary focus | One fifth are strongly against the levy:<br><br>• Concerns about costs<br><br>• Feelings of the levy being unfair to businesses<br><br>• Feelings that the government is just revenue raising<br><br>Lower levels of concern about waste management and less likely to believe they could do more to reduce waste | Local Councils<br><br>TV<br><br>Social media |

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