

4 August 2010

Ms Kate Jones  
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability  
GPO Box 2454  
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Ms Jones *Kate,*

In recent days several media reports have noted that the government's draft waste management strategy currently open for consultation includes a proposed ban on lighter-than-air, or helium, balloons at state government and government-sponsored events.

I am also aware of your public assurances that the draft strategy in its current form does not propose a ban on helium or similar balloons used at private or non-government functions, but that you are seeking public feedback on whether such a wider ban should be imposed.

I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you to outline the position of the Leukaemia Foundation of Queensland on this issue.

The Foundation currently organises a wide range of fundraising events across the state each year. We are also the beneficiary of a calendar of events for which organisational responsibility rests with supporters, sponsor companies, or other outside organisations. While some of these events may include the use of helium balloons, the Foundation does not encourage their release.

In addition, since 2008 the Foundation has organised the *Light the Night* event at which gold, white, or blue air-filled balloons lit by a special light are carried in a short walk by participants to remember, celebrate, and give hope to people with leukaemias, lymphomas, myeloma, and related blood disorders.

The event will be held this year on the evening of Thursday, October 7 at 11 locations in Queensland and is expected to attract thousands of participants across the state.

The balloons used at *Light the Night* events are not helium balloons and as such are not released into the air. Participants carry them attached to a stick and are reminded of the need to pick up rubbish they may generate, including deflated or burst balloons, and put it in an appropriate bin.

The Foundation would be concerned if public feedback on the waste strategy resulted in a ban on helium balloons at non-government public events attracting large crowds was extended to cover air-filled balloons.

I seek your assurance that any potential ban would cover only lighter-than-air or helium balloons and that increasingly popular events such as *Light the Night* can continue to use air-filled balloons as its centrepiece.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Johnstone  
Chief Executive Officer

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