

Carla Clynick



To Agriculture and Environment Committee,

I am a concerned member of the public and a member of community group called Take Action for Pumicestone Passage Inc. (TAPP). The problem of plastic in the Pumicestone Passage is very real and growing daily. At present we are very fortunate to have a local group called 'Night Eyes' who take a boat out daily and pick up the plastic from the water. They are finding that they collect approximately 1000 litres of rubbish each week but they are only able to pick up what has not yet gone below the surface – it is frightening to think about what the volume of plastic under the water could be! Plastic bags and drink containers make up the bulk of the rubbish in the Passage and therefore this Bill is so very welcome and necessary. The pollution caused by these plastics is devastating to the Passage which is a Ramsar declared wetland, a haven for migratory birds, as well as the draw card for our tourists – the main industry in our region.

I have read and considered the explanatory notes regarding the Bill and agree in principal with all its aspects.

In Part 3A – Banned Shopping Bags

I generally agree with the objectives listed – that we reduce the pollution and we insist that retailers stop providing one use plastic bags.

Section 99B - defines what is meant by a banned bag and an acceptable bag.

“A banned plastic shopping bag is defined as a carry bag with handles that is made in whole or part from plastic, whether or not the plastic is degradable.”

I agree that an acceptable bag should not have any plastic component at all. Any acceptable bag should be made solely from a natural material which will readily break down without damaging the environment.

Degradable plastic and even biodegradable plastic still causes problems in our environment. Marine life will still consume them, they still need time and the correct conditions to degrade effectively and meanwhile they are still a litter problem.

I do feel that the Bill should include the banning of the smaller plastic 'barrier' bags which are provided for the purchase a variety of produce – mainly the loose fruit and veg items. These are often recycled in the home but still cause problems in landfill. The obvious solution would be to bring a fruit/ vegetable bag, or container and this should be insisted upon. The very minimal standard for these barrier bags and any wrapped fresh produce is that they should be made from biodegradable plastic and the public should be educated as to the manner in which they can be composted in the home garden.

The Styrofoam packaging in which retailers place fresh food items are also a landfill problem and should also be included in the ban, environmentally sound alternatives to the Styrofoam are available and should also be insisted upon.

This bill is going some way to helping our marine life to survive and cleaning up our waterways but it needs to go further. Packaging items like bait bags the fishermen use, dog 'poo bags', plastic chip bags and disposable coffee cups, which inevitably end up in the waterways should also be regulated.

I agree that the regulations need to apply across the board - that this Bill is relevant to all retailers and I agree with the fines which will be imposed if these regulations are not followed. I strongly feel that all regulation needs to be enforced for it to be successful.

I agree that the Minister needs to review effectiveness of the plastic shopping bag ban and I agree that this should be done three months after its introduction. I also feel that the Minister should have the ability to make any changes at this stage to ensure that the objectives are being reached.

Part 3B Beverage Container Refund Scheme

I agree with all the objects of this part as stated.

There could still be a problem with containers which are not suitable for recycling. These should not be allowed to be retailed in Queensland. Manufacturers should only make recyclable containers.

This important legislation will make a huge difference to our waterways!

Part 5 Product Responsibility Organisation

I agree with the need to appoint a Product Responsibility Organisation for the refund scheme.

I agree with the statement that the Minister's invitation to apply for this appointment may -"state the outcomes to be met by the Organisation in a stated period after the appointment that relate to the functions of the Organisation and to administration of the scheme in a way that provides opportunities for social enterprise, innovation and the development of technology. The invitation may also include other requirements for the application." But feel that this should say that the invitation to apply for the appointment will – not may – "state etc."

I feel that this section of the Bill is sound and I agree with all of its parts.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill. I feel that this is a very important piece of legislation and look forward to seeing the positive change to our environment which this Bill will bring about.

Yours Sincerely

Carla Clynick