



Speech by

CARRYN SULLIVAN

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

Hansard 28 November 2001

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL [No. 2]

Ms CARRYN SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (9.00 p.m.): I rise to support the Environmental Protection Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2001 introduced by the Environment Minister, the Hon. Dean Wells. I support and will continue to support any bill which contains amendments tackling the better management of waste, which is becoming an ever-increasing problem. However, this government is doing something about it. I commend the minister for taking yet another giant step forward by further extending the cooperation which exists between the state's Environmental Protection Agency—or EPA—and local councils to further develop the correct and reasonable management of waste. I note that this bill also seeks to amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to facilitate the reuse and the recycling of waste.

I acknowledge, as does the member for Keppel, that councils are having trouble finding and managing suitable dump sites. However, they can still do their bit. I was part of a council that introduced recycling bins for the first time some ten years ago. I was proud to be part of a team which tackled waste management in a responsible manner. To date, and under new management, that council has continued to emphasise the importance of recycling by contracting waste managers to continue to provide recycling bins.

There has been some concern in the past about the definition of waste. Most waste today has some value because of its ability to be recycled, reused or reprocessed, but this value is not defined. We need to emphasise the importance of that waste, which has real value. The term 'waste' is very restrictive. In the past, concern has been expressed about the inability to recycle, reuse and reprocess certain wastes. The public may conjure up undesirable and unwarranted connotations associated with waste being turned into new products. A local mayoral candidate who placed on record his desire to obtain drinkable recycled water from sewerage treatment plants failed to become mayor mainly because of the public's perception of this recycled water. These days, technology allows for tertiary reticulation. The community needs to be encouraged to see the value in reusing water, our most valuable resource—a debate that will have to wait for another time.

Currently, councils refer to section 396 of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to control waste management works. A council may also refer to the Environmental Protection Agency under the Environmental Protection Regulation 1998. In the past, industry has commented that it believes there must be a better and simpler way of dealing with the issue. This bill is the result of a wide-ranging, comprehensive debate and consultation process with all affected parties.

This bill also contains amendments to the environmental impact statement, or the EIS, process. Those amendments will allow the following: one, increased clarity with reference to the EIS process; two, regulations to specify public notices published during the assessment. This ensures the process will meet the needs for accredited assessment processes under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. This bilateral agreement streamlines the process and goes a long way towards avoiding future duplication of state and federal approvals. It will be welcomed by all parties involved as it provides a whole-of-government approach, decreases costs and shortens delays.

As the minister has said, this bill reduces the burden of regulation and provides for procedural fairness. It is supportive of a cooperative between local government, the state's EPA and industry. This

bill goes a long way toward delivering sound environmental management in the state and providing the desired high standards of environmental protection for all Queenslanders.
