



Speech by

Mr N. ROBERTS

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Hansard 28 November 2001

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL [No. 2]

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (9.13 p.m.): The Environmental Protection Legislation Amendment Bill will continue to strengthen the cooperative relationship between the EPA and local governments in relation to appropriate waste management. This bill will amend the definition of 'waste' in the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to include a provision that will allow the further reuse and recycling of waste.

We are all well aware of the environmental benefits of recycling and efficient waste management, but perhaps not everyone is aware of the employment benefits. The Department of Employment and Training has recognised not only the environmental benefits but also the opportunity for training for young people in an area that will provide them with long-term job opportunities. In the last budget, \$10 million was allocated for the Youth for the Environment and Local Communities Program to create 600 additional traineeships for 15- to 24-year-olds in 2001-02. There will be a total of 1,200 additional traineeships over two years. This traineeship will give participants nationally accredited qualifications through work in their local communities in areas of environmental protection, horticulture and waste management. The majority of placements will be in local councils as these agencies have the greatest capacity to employ environmental trainees. Statutory authorities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and a number of community organisations will also be taking on trainees. Funding of up to \$16,000 will be granted to eligible agencies for each trainee. This program has been created to address the continuing problem of high youth unemployment while linking young people with careers in an important industry. It also allows young people to participate in projects improving the natural environment of their local community.

Youth for the Environment and Local Communities is a component of the state government's \$407 million Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. The program is progressing well with a great deal of interest from both local councils and other agencies. Since the program was announced, a total of 533 traineeships have been allocated to approved agencies. These agencies have been actively recruiting trainees, of which the majority will begin their traineeships in January and February of next year.

As previously mentioned, local government will take the majority of placements. To date, a total of 312 young people have been accepted in this area across Queensland. Twenty-four will work with statutory authorities such as the Gladstone Port Authority, which will take on eight young people, and 10 trainees will be placed with Queensland Rail. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community councils throughout Queensland will place 28 trainees. A range of community organisations are also playing their part with 43 traineeships allocated. The Body Shop will place 10 trainees in their Speak Out project and 17 trainees will work with Greening Australia. I congratulate the minister on this bill. It will not only be of environmental benefit but also strengthen an industry that offers significant job opportunities for young people—opportunities that this government has recognised in the introduction of the Youth for the Environment and Local Communities Program.

A company in my electorate is leading the way in Australia in the recycling of polystyrene. Kuhn Corp Packaging in Geebung has successfully completed trials in producing egg cartons made from 100 per cent recycled polystyrene specifically from yoghurt tub post-production waste. Trials are continuing using waste polystyrene material from kerb-side collections as well as blending this material

with the waste yoghurt tub material currently being used. The Environmental Protection Agency has been working with Kuhn Corp during the development of this exciting and innovative initiative. Kuhn Corp has achieved something that was deemed almost impossible by many people in the industry. It has begun recycling a waste product that many believed was destined to remain a landfill product for generations to come. I congratulate Walter Kuhn and his team on a job well done.

The government, via ministerial visits to the Geebung factory, has acknowledged the good work undertaken by Kuhn Corp. Recently, the Minister for Environment, Dean Wells, visited the factory as a part of Recycling Week promotions and Henry Palaszczuk, the Minister for Primary Industries, visited the site as a part of World Egg Day celebrations. Kuhn Corp produce polystyrene egg cartons and its own labels which are applied using technology developed in-house by the company. The company is making a significant contribution to recycling waste material and is leading the way in the development of the technology and know-how in the recycling of polystyrene. I congratulate the company again on its achievements to date and wish it well in the future development of its recycling processes that, hopefully, will lead to other products being produced from recycled material.

I want to conclude my remarks in this bill by saying a few words about Anne Beasley, a local environmental and community activist in my electorate who tragically died in December of last year. No discussion on environmental issues in my electorate is complete without reference to Anne Beasley. She was passionate about protecting and enhancing the environmental assets in and around Nudgee Beach and the Boondall Wetlands. Her single-minded dedication to this cause was responsible for many local improvements and advances in the environmental management of the Boondall Wetlands area.

As well as protecting the local environment, Anne devoted considerable effort to educating visitors, particularly schoolchildren, about the need to protect and preserve our natural environment. For eight years she chaired the Boondall Wetlands management committee, established by the Brisbane City Council, and she was never shy in expressing her views to politicians and bureaucrats alike.

Anne was actively involved in a number of other local community and environmental groups, including Nudgee Beach Progress Association, Brisbane Airport Environmental Committee, Brisbane Airport Consultative Committee, Brisbane City Council Wetlands and Waterways Advisory Group and the Northside Airport Action Group.

Anne was much loved by her family, namely her husband Ron, her children Scott, Ben and Lee and her mum, Betty Aitkenhead, who is also a dear friend to my own family. The family continues to carry on the proud tradition set by Anne of actively involving themselves and participating in the affairs of their much-loved homeland at Nudgee Beach.

Anne Beasley's contributions to environmental and community affairs have been permanently recognised by the construction of a lookout named in her honour. Anne Beasley's Lookout overlooks the Boondall Wetlands which she loved and worked so hard to protect. I acknowledge the efforts of local councillor Kim Flessner and the Brisbane City Council in creating this fitting tribute to Anne's work and life and to the participants in the state government's Community Jobs Plan who installed concrete paths and extensive landscaping as part of the lookout precinct. I commend the bill to the House.
