



Speech by


## Christine Smith

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Hansard Wednesday, 15 February 2012

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### WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING REGULATION: DISALLOWANCE OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

 **Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (8.44 pm): This government recognises that local government plays a major role in providing effective waste management in Queensland and enabling the state to achieve the goals of the Queensland Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy. In recognition of this role, the government is supporting local government in the collection of current, usable data and the improvement of waste infrastructure. The funding associated with this support, and the initiatives introduced through the new legislation, is seeing some real, tangible benefits enabling local governments to make well-informed decisions and improve their delivery of waste management services.

In conjunction with local government and private industry, the Department of Environment and Resource Management has gathered data through a state-wide survey identifying waste facilities and recycling infrastructure in the levy area and the non-levy area. The data has been collated into a report that is available to all local governments and will be valuable as councils plan their local and regional waste management needs. This is the first time that state-wide data of this nature has been available. In addition to assisting the public sector, the data will also assist the private sector as they seek to invest in new waste management infrastructure and provide services to regional Queensland.

For a number of years my family operated a rubbish removal and recycling business on the Gold Coast. We concentrated on high-rise constructions, and the waste generated from those building sites was extraordinary. It mostly consisted of timber, tiles, concrete and cardboard—all products that could and should be recycled. A small business with only one sorting machine could not keep up with the demand, and truckloads of waste were transported to Ipswich to be dumped down mine shafts. Eventually these shafts will be full and landfill sites are becoming a premium. We have to look at ways to encourage businesses to reassess their waste disposal habits.

Since the introduction of the levy, over 90 per cent of medium or large landfills within the levy area throughout Queensland have undertaken surveys of their landfills. This information will assist future planning as, for the first time ever, there is a collective understanding of the availability of the state's current landfill space.

As part of the state's commitment to assist local government in their transition to levy readiness, grants programs to the value of \$17.1 million have been offered to local governments for infrastructure assistance. In the phase 1 grants program, 10 weighbridges were delivered, to a value of \$1.7 million. These grants have allowed councils to install weighbridges, software, gatehouses, traffic lights and CCTV. In the phase 2 infrastructure grants program 36 grants were issued, to the value of \$2 million. These grants have allowed councils to undertake computer, traffic control and security upgrades and repairs.

Whilst the initial phase 1 and phase 2 grants programs were directed towards levy readiness, the current phase 3 program for weighbridges and ancillary equipment has been made available for both the levy and non-levy area. This includes remote local governments and Aboriginal councils. DERM is

currently assessing the current round of the program, with applications of approximately \$7.9 million being received. This program is rolling out new weighbridge installations, gatehouses, entrance works, software upgrades, security devices and fencing improvements. The \$13 million program has been directed towards local government over the two-year period to 30 June 2013. The infrastructure upgrades will not only allow for the efficient collection of the levy; they will also allow local governments to make considered investment decisions for future waste management works based on real data.

Many councils have taken the opportunity brought about by the infrastructure grants to examine their own infrastructure and community needs following amalgamations. Many have also made decisions which see an improvement in the environmental performance of sites. For example, the local governments of Western Downs, Toowoomba and Southern Downs have taken the opportunity to plan the rationalisation of some facilities where it has been found that overservicing has occurred. It also offers the opportunity to provide staffing at other sites where it has been found that security is needed.

Charters Towers Regional Council had three uncontrolled landfills prior to the levy introduction. Council now intends to supervise these sites and record all waste transactions on a computer tablet. The benefits of the introduction of the waste reforms are already being recognised. In addition to local government infrastructure grants, it must always be remembered that councils are getting an absolute windfall out of this. A \$100 million fund to be used exclusively by councils for waste management is being established. That is a massive funding contribution from the state where other jurisdictions with a levy in place have not even contemplated such an offer. I cannot support this disallowance motion.