




Speech By  
**Hon. Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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**WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AND OTHER LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection)  
(3.49 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill amends the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012 and the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995. This bill was referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee on 13 November last year for the committee's consideration. I thank the committee members for their constructive comments and recommendations on the bill and note in particular that the committee has recommended that the bill be passed. The committee tabled its report on 25 February this year, putting forward four recommendations and two points for clarification. The department has provided a response to these items and I table the government's response to the report.

*Tabled paper:* Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 17—Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, government response [\[2163\]](#).

I will move the two recommended amendments during consideration in detail of the bill and will also move further amendments that have been identified by my department. One recommendation made by the committee was that clause 28 should be amended to include 'on or before'. I understand this was a particular recommendation put forward by the chair, the member for Lockyer, and I understand that this will make this provision consistent with the act as a whole. This is a reasonable recommendation and I will move that amendment be made to ensure a waste disposal site operator is able to provide a data report on or before the due date not just before the due date. My department will continue to consult with waste disposal site operators in relation to the due date for the data reporting period which will be prescribed by regulation.

This bill forms part of the Newman government's election commitment to repeal the waste levy and cut the cost of living for Queenslanders. It also helps meet the government's commitment of reducing the regulatory burden and bringing Queensland's economy back on track. In 2012 the government commenced the levy repeal process by amending the Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2011. This amendment established a nil levy rate for all waste and came into effect on 1 July last year. The amendments in the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 currently before us now complete the repeal of that levy. The amendments do so by removing the head of power for the waste levy and the now redundant references to the waste levy from the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011. This includes the provisions in relation to the calculation, verification and remittance of the waste levy, levy exemption processes and volumetric survey requirements.

The bill provides for transitional provisions to enable levy related enforcement action. The transitional provisions will allow the government to pursue compliance action if necessary for offences under the repealed provisions such as levy evasion and failure to keep the relevant documents. I do

not, however, anticipate that this action will be necessary based on the very high level of compliance to date, but the provisions are there as a safeguard.

The amendments also change the weighbridges requirement for waste disposal sites. This bill removes the requirement for smaller waste disposal sites, those sites disposing of between 5,000 and 10,000 tonnes in a year, to install a weighbridge, removing an unfunded impact on small sites. Additionally, the time period for installing a weighbridge at sites of greater than 10,000 tonnes has been extended. This provides added flexibility for the remaining 10 sites that have not completed installation of their weighbridges.

Additionally, data reporting processes are being simplified under this bill. The frequency that waste disposal facilities will be required to submit data will be determined by regulation. This was previously monthly for sites that were required to pay the levy. I must, however, emphasise that the government believes that robust data is essential to underpin policy development and support business opportunities in the waste industry and to allow for good local and regional planning. As part of the development of the new industry led waste strategy, a data and reporting working group has been established to look at our data collection needs. The government believes that it must lead by example and that is why the requirement for state and local governments to prepare a strategic waste reduction and recycling plan has been retained. However, the requirement for government owned corporations to prepare plans has been removed to align those requirements with other corporate entities.

Amendments have been made to extend the time, through regulation, by when these plans are required as they need to reflect the government's waste strategy. As the strategy developed by the previous government was based on the levy, it is appropriate to delay the requirements for a new strategy. The government is committed in its endeavours to help businesses adopt more sustainable practices to reduce waste costs, improve competitiveness and to adapt to changing conditions and that is why we are working with industry to develop a new industry led waste strategy for Queensland. I am pleased to report to the House the waste industry has been assisting the government to identify the priorities, challenges and opportunities that exist for reforming waste management in this state. To date I have held three ministerial forums with a number of key players, including all four pillars of resources, agriculture, construction and tourism, as well as commerce and industry, academia, waste and resource recovery, environment, community and local government sectors. The new strategy will deliver what the waste sector needs without compromising environmental protection. The department will take on a facilitation role in the development of this new waste strategy for Queensland, forming partnerships, agreements and seeking outcomes. A discussion paper about the new strategy will be released for public comment in the second half of this year. Through reviewing the existing policy settings relating to waste management we can provide other more sophisticated policy incentives that will encourage business to recover materials and not dispose of waste to landfill. By removing green tape, streamlining processes and barriers for business and reviewing the policy settings around recovery, treatment and disposal we can provide more indirect incentives for business to divert material from landfill and recover useful resources. All this can be done without an industry waste levy—a tax on business.

In addition to amending the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011, this bill amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to remove the definition of a leviable waste disposal site from the waste definition. The bill also amends the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012 to ensure there is clarity and consistency between the acts. Additional provisions to this act allow operators to suspend operations where it is no longer viable for them in the short term, which is particularly relevant to the intensive agriculture sector. This ensures operators can avoid those periods of financial hardship and maintain viable economic growth.

Amendments to the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 allow for the creation of self-assessable codes under the integrated development assessment system under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. Low risk development will be able to proceed according to standard criteria and environmental protection will be maintained through the standard conditions under the self-assessable code.

The Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee has commended this bill to the House with only minor amendments. It takes another step towards the government achieving its commitment of reducing red tape, of reducing the regulatory burden and of supporting economic growth. The repeal of the waste levy will encourage business growth by reducing the cost for Queenslanders to do business. This bill retains strong environmental protection while also encouraging economic growth in Queensland. I commend this bill to the House.