




Speech By
Robbie Katter
MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

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

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.24 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. A lot has been said already about the bill and I will not bore people by going over a lot of the details of the good things that I think it delivers. I will keep to the points that are very pertinent to my area. I move sideways and talk about an aspect of this bill that applies to a lot of bills that come through this House, which is the different way it affects remote and country areas. A bill may seem to be good and it may enable some things to happen in metropolitan areas, but it can adversely affect remote areas. This is a good case in point.

I will reflect on my own experiences with the tax that was imposed during my time in the Mount Isa City Council prior to my term in this place. I served on the Mount Isa City Council when the waste levy was first introduced. At that time the council worked hard on strategies to minimise the impact of the imposition of the bill and find the best way to offset the costs of the weighbridge, which was funded at that time but there were ongoing maintenance costs. We had to deal with the fact that it was hard enough to get employees to work at the dump in Mount Isa, but adding extra duties to their workloads made the whole process a lot harder. Those costs had to be passed on and they are passed on to small businesses. A lot of the small struggling businesses around Mount Isa certainly made themselves heard.

I point out that there are very few opportunities for recycling at the Mount Isa tip, despite our best efforts. The tyranny of distance was a factor. The closest recycling plant that we sourced was in the Darling Downs, which made all our recycling efforts unviable unless they were heavily sponsored by business. We had some sponsorship from the IGA, but unfortunately it was pushed out by Coles and Woolworths and we had no recycling activities in the end. These things just are not viable for a lot of remote towns and cities. If they are done with an agenda of eventually performing recycling activities or getting energy from those sorts of things, they might seem like a good idea in metropolitan areas, but they create extra imposts and are not workable in some remote areas. Therefore, that bill never helped to achieve any recycling targets in the north-west, but it put a new cost on small businesses, which was inevitably passed on.

At the same time that that bill was passed, the local government was also given the impost of performing a state government activity. It passed on the responsibility of doing environmental checking and monitoring businesses, which we were not funded for. At the same time we put two new costs on businesses, which resulted in everyone complaining to the Mount Isa City Council and the costs were passed straight on to our ratepayers, even though it was imposed by the state government.

Although I sound negative about recycling activities, obviously personally I am strongly in favour of those activities and I am very conscious of my own levels of waste. Like renewable energy

and such things, this needs to be developed to a point where they do not put a huge impost on business. Until we reach that point, they may not be viable. I support the bill as it helps small struggling businesses that are constantly battling the environment delivered to them by this government and the federal government and are finding it very difficult. I acknowledge there are opportunities to extend the legislation further and direct it towards many activities in the growing resource sector, which can impact much more significantly on the environment, particularly in smaller and remote areas. Overall, this bill deserves support to the point that it will reduce the immediate burden on small businesses, but I encourage investigation on taking it further for the waste generated from our growing resource sector. I commend the bill to the House.