




Speech By  
**Fiona Simpson**

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

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Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2017

### **WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (7.45 pm): As a coastal member for the beautiful seat of Maroochydore, I want to see our waterways protected from the rubbish discarded by careless hands which has found its way into the stomachs of birds and marine life. From ancient times, the Maroochy and Mooloolah rivers, which are in my electorate, have connected the coastline and have been lifelines for human and native wildlife. Plastic is a relatively recent and unnatural introduction into the ecosystem. It has been devastating for too many creatures.

I commend the many organisations out there trying to push back against this rubbish to ensure there is hope for our local environment. Maroochy Water Watch and catchment groups, Coastcare and a multitude of other groups have regularly participated in clean-ups, particularly Clean Up Australia Day. So many of these groups are out there throughout the year. The work they do to clean up and restore our environment is absolutely amazing. However, I wish that this work were not necessary. Despite growing public awareness of the need to protect our environment, rubbish still pours into our most precious waterways throughout our nation and our beloved local areas. Greater protections to stop at least some of this rubbish finding its way into watercourses is necessary.

This legislation's main intention is to ban single-use plastic bags and also introduce a container deposit scheme which I support. There are some questions about implementation which the shadow environment minister has raised. I await the minister's response to those questions. The success of this bill lies in the implementation and the yet unseen regulations.

The LNP took leadership on these issues, launching our policy last year both with regard to single-use plastic bags as well as a cash-for-container policy. Many of the so-called degradable bags have not saved the environment but instead harmed it as they unleash microparticles of plastic into the guts of marine creatures. They have not been the answer.

I am sure others have experienced what I have experienced. If you put something in one of these bags and put it in the back of the cupboard and then go to pull it out later, the bag disintegrates in your hands. It is absolutely disgusting. I do not like it when that happens because it is messy, but it is devastating when those particles go into our watercourses and then into the guts of animals. There is growing evidence that these microparticles of plastic in our environment are increasingly having quite a devastating impact on marine wildlife and bird life. Whether it is these disintegrating bags or whether it is other types of bags that do not disintegrate which are going into our environment and being sucked into the ecosystem and causing damage, it is clear that something has to be done.

The move to introduce a cash-for-container scheme with a refund for approved beverage containers has winners other than just the environment. I have heard other members comment that our Scouts and Guides and potentially many other community organisations will get involved in collecting this rubbish to support their great community work. There is a dual benefit. Not only will we reduce litter and increase recycling through this particular scheme, but the flow-on benefit to community

organisations is substantial. This scheme will take very careful implementation and, as mentioned, the success or otherwise will be in the execution of the legislation—how well that is done—and the regulation that fits around that. The commencement date for the container refund scheme and the bag ban is July 2018.