




Speech By  
**Joseph Kelly**

**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

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

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.40 pm): I support the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017. I would like to start by thanking the other committee members and the secretariat for their work on this bill. I would also like to thank the many individuals and organisations who took the time to make submissions and appear as witnesses in the hearings. Many of these people and organisations have been working on the issue of plastic pollution for decades and I acknowledge their ongoing concern for our environment.

The committee made four recommendations, the first of which is that the bill should be passed by the House. I am glad that was a unanimous recommendation. I am pleased that the recommendations have been accepted in principle and I note that the minister has identified an alternative way to achieve recommendation 2 and I support this change.

While plastic was a product developed in the late 1800s, it was not until the 1940s that it moved to being a widespread part of our life. People eat off it and we eat with it. We wear it. People drive in vehicles and communicate with devices full of it. People live in dwellings where it is ubiquitous and it is essential in our schools and in our hospitals. Few of us now could navigate our daily lives and our daily activities without plastic. The properties that make plastic useful—its strength, its longevity, its adaptability—also make it an environmental problem. There is a growing awareness that people need to rethink their relationship with plastic and the way that it is used.

The support for the measures in this bill was almost universal. The provisions will require significant changes to the way we live, but those making submissions overwhelmingly indicated that the community is ready to make the change. I would like to acknowledge the extensive consultation that occurred before this bill came to the parliament. The minister and the department are to be congratulated for consulting widely with industry groups, environmental groups and individual stakeholders. All of these groups have come together with good intent and spirit to work to resolve a major problem for our society.

This is an important way forward to solve the major environmental challenges that lie ahead. We must come together and work collectively to solve these problems with sensible policy solutions that work for all sectors of our community. The banning of single-use shopping bags will require changes of practices for everyone. We all take it for granted that we can go to any retail outlet and get a plastic bag to carry home our goods. The environmental impacts of this assumption are enormous and the submissions demonstrated that the community is ready to make the switch.

I would like to acknowledge the Norman Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee, or N4C, which work in my own electorate and made a submission with respect to this bill. I have been volunteering with this group for 20 years and have participated in the work they do caring for our catchment and the local environment. They told the committee of the impacts of plastic on the health of the waterway they care for and rightly identified that single-use plastic bags and disposable drink containers were a major part of the plastic pollution they deal with.

Clean Up Australia Day is a major activity each year in my electorate and most sites are around Norman Creek or its tributaries such as Bowies Flat Wetland, Glindemann Park or Joachim Street Park. It is amazing to see the number of volunteers who show up to help on this day, and I am really pleased that for most of these volunteers it is not something they do once; they do this regularly all year long.

I am really pleased that local schools such as the Coorparoo State School have environmental school leaders and an environmental group that coordinates their contribution to Clean Up Australia Day. When I go out each year with students from Coorparoo State School and other young people across the electorate they are amazed and distressed at the volumes of plastic bags and drink bottles that we pull out of places like Bowies Flat Wetland. It is for their future that this bill is so important. The Coorparoo State School environmental group and the N4C do a lot to ensure that our environment is sustainable for the future of our community. I know the N4C and the Coorparoo State School environmental group will be extremely pleased that we are taking this important step to ban single-use plastic bags and establish a container refund scheme to increase recycling.

I also know that the thousands of people across all parts of our community who have contacted me about this issue will be pleased. These people and these groups know that this is crucial for our environment. They know business will need to change. They know we must all change our behaviours and our lifestyle. They know that governments must show leadership to assist people to make the necessary changes, and I am proud to be part of a government that has shown that leadership. Members of my community know we can achieve this by all parts of society working together for a sustainable future. Labor governments have consistently demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the sustainability of natural environments. This is one more step to ensure a sustainable future for all. I commend this bill to the House.