




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2017

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.50 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill 2017. This bill is important for all Queenslanders to ensure that we are recycling our rubbish and cleaning up our environment. Through the introduction of banning lightweight plastic bags, known as one-use plastic bags, the implementation of the container refund scheme and enabling greater control of the use of our end-of-waste resources by amending the code, the bill will contribute to reducing the amount of pollution in the environment by changing consumer behaviour, which is an important aspect of the bill.

My electorate is known as the gateway to the Whitsundays. It is also surrounded by the natural beauty of the Eungella National Park, as well as many beaches, creeks and rivers, including our special Pioneer River, which is the only blue water river in Queensland. We are the custodians of our natural heritage for future generations to come. It is time that we ensure our beaches, creeks, rivers and bushland are kept uncluttered and free from pollution.

We are all aware of the damage that plastic bags do to our marine life. Not only does it take away from the beauty of our waterways; it kills animals. It is time that we took out of our system as many one-use plastic bags as possible. What goes in the water from my electorate ends up on the Great Barrier Reef. This bill will encourage consumers and retailers to consider whether a plastic bag is needed. If they choose to use a bag, they can use a re-usable bag. In some instances, consumers have already started to use re-usable bags and many people keep shopping bags in their car boots. Retailers will be able to offer alternative bags for sale, as they currently do at many supermarkets.

A Product Responsibility Organisation will be set up to administer and provide governance for a beverage container refund scheme. This will ensure manufacturers of beverage products take stewardship and responsibility for beverage products that generate waste in the form of empty containers. The entity running the container refund scheme is able to enter into an agreement with individual container refund point operators or entities acting on behalf of a number of refund point operators. There is flexibility built into this scheme. The scheme allows for reverse vending machines, where a consumer can take their eligible empty containers for a refund. I have witnessed those machines working in suburbs overseas. People line up with their containers and the system works quickly and efficiently.

A charitable organisation can operate a container refund point and also receive donated containers. The refund for the containers can be paid to the organisation so long as they keep records to show the payment. A representative from scouting was at the Keppel hearing. He reported that in New South Wales the organisation relies on the container refund scheme for the majority of their fundraising. There appears to be an interest in the opportunities for charities to manage a collection point. The number of empty drink containers on the roadsides and dumped in landfill will be reduced because of this bill. The containers will have value, so customers will benefit from their changed behaviour.

End-of-waste approvals are considered in the bill. This allows for an applicant to apply to the chief executive for an end-of-waste approval to conduct a trial to demonstrate that one kind of waste can be used as a resource. It needs to be proven that the use of the resource is safe, will not cause environmental harm and is suitable for the end-of-waste code. The approvals will be based on the product being used for one or more specific uses, which will restrict the resource being used outside the approval in such a way that may cause environmental harm. Already in Mackay our sewage waste is recycled and the water is used by farmers for irrigation. That is a win-win for the environment and for the farmers. There is great potential for waste products from our sugar milling process to produce viable commercial products from what was previously considered waste. The potential to safely generate waste into useful products is great. I thank the committee members for their support of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.