




Speech By  
**Leanne Linard**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2017

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

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (5.40 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of my community and lend my strong support for the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill—a bill that will substantially reduce plastic pollution in Queensland. From 1 July 2018 this bill will introduce a statewide container refund scheme and a ban on the supply of single-use lightweight plastic shopping bags in Queensland. These initiatives will reduce the amount of litter in our environment. As most know, the majority of plastic ends up in landfill which in itself creates issues for the efficient processing of waste, but it is the damage it causes to our rivers, creeks and marine environment, to our bird life and animals that can become entangled or mistake such waste for food which causes an immediate threat. Like many in my community, this is an issue I am very passionate about.

The Nudgee electorate, located on the edge of Moreton Bay, lays claim to the environmental jewels Nudgee Beach Reserve and Boondall Wetlands—1,500 hectares of tidal flats, mangroves, saltmarshes, melaleuca wetlands, grasslands and open forest. It is an area of precious environmental value and has been listed as a wetland of international importance. I have spent most of my life exploring these wetlands: from school holidays spent at my grandparents' home in Banyo taking trips to Nudgee Beach; to school trips to the Nudgee Beach environmental centre as a student at Earnshaw State College, exploring and learning about the beauty and complexity of this extraordinary ecosystem; to today, when I have the great privilege of teaching my two young boys about its precious natural value and why it must be preserved. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Nudgee Beach environmental centre, their Parents & Citizens Association, the Nudgee Community Reference Group and the Boondall Wetlands Environment Centre for their stewardship and passionate advocacy for the protection of these precious reserves.

The wetlands have a diversity of wildlife including flying foxes, possums, squirrel gliders, frogs and reptiles. It offers habitats for over 190 species of birds including Australian kestrels and ospreys, sandpipers, egrets and kingfishers, as well as rainbow bee-eaters on the mangrove boardwalk. Each year around 40,000 migratory shorebirds feed on the food-rich mudflats and roost in the saltmarshes and mangroves along the shore. They travel to Moreton Bay each spring from as far away as Siberia, Japan, Mongolia and Alaska.

There is increasing evidence about the cumulative impact that plastic has on our soils, waterways and marine environments. Plastic does not break down in an animal's digestive system when ingested and it is a known cause of starvation. It is deeply concerning, then, to learn that 16 million bags enter our environment as litter every year. It is concerning that the National Litter Index indicates that Queensland is consistently the most littered state and has one of the lowest recycling rates of all mainland states. The community has shown that it is ready to take action to reduce such pollution, with 96 per cent of the over 26,000 submissions to the government's discussion paper supporting the introduction of a plastic bag ban. The ban will bring us in line with four other states and territories but positively differentiate Queensland by including both degradable and biodegradable plastic bags in the ban, as biodegradable bags can be as dangerous for wildlife as traditional plastic shopping bags.

The bill also establishes Queensland's own container refund scheme. Empty containers that are returned for recycling will earn a 10-cent refund. Not only will this incentivise a reduction in the amount of litter and increase recycling, but the scheme creates a welcome opportunity for community groups and social enterprises to establish a source of independent revenue for themselves.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the students across my electorate who have written to me passionately advocating for such improvements and to the many members of my local community who have taken the time to raise this issue with me at my various community information and market stalls across the electorate. I am proud to be a member of a government that is taking steps to protect our precious natural environment. I commend the bill to the House.