




Speech By  
**Peter Russo**

**MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK**

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

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (5.19 pm): I rise to speak to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Bill that had its first reading in this House on 14 June 2017 when the Hon. Steven Miles, the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, presented a bill for an act to amend the waste reduction and recycling legislation. I support the passing of this important piece of legislation. During my contribution on the debate, I will outline my personal experience working with the constituents in my current electorate of Sunnybank, which will soon be known as the seat of Toohy once the election is called.

The minister pointed out in his speech when he presented this bill to the House that this bill will substantially reduce plastic pollution and pollution caused by disposable containers that should be making their way into our recycling bins but are making their way into our waterways and then into the sea. The bill introduces two important initiatives. The first initiative is the statewide container refund scheme and the second initiative is the ban on the supply of lightweight plastic shopping bags in Queensland. I will also outline a conversation I had with my four-year-old, Joe, when we were at the shops on Friday afternoon.

We are lucky to live in a state that has some of the richest biodiversity in the world—from the plains in Central Queensland, to the mountain ranges, to the beaches on our east coast and the islands just off the coast and our wonderful Great Barrier Reef. Queensland has one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world, and it is the responsibility of the members of this Legislative Assembly to protect this heritage for our children and our children's children. To not do so is completely irresponsible.

Queenslanders are not good at recycling. In fact Queensland has the lowest rate of recycling of any state in Australia. The container refund scheme which is introduced by this bill will provide that, for every container that is returned, the person or organisation that is returning the container will earn 10 cents. This refund of 10 cents will have a positive effect on our community. It will allow community groups to raise much needed funds for community projects, it will reduce litter and it will allow areas where recycling is now not part of the regular collection service to actively participate in recycling. In my electorate alone, I have community groups and schools that are keen to start participating in the refund scheme and they look forward to its implementation on the passing of this legislation.

This brings me to my conversation with Joe, my four-year-old, while we were out shopping last Friday. We were walking towards the dry cleaners when a plastic bag was picked up by the wind and blown towards us. Joe picked up the bag and a squashed plastic water bottle that lay on the ground. I said to Joe, 'We should put that plastic bag in the bin.' Joe replied, 'So it doesn't get into the sea and hurt the turtles.' Joe, my four-year-old, understands why recycling is so important. It is important that this bill has the support of those opposite. Although they are often slow to embrace progressive legislation, they do so today. I also want to say that this one is for you, Joe, and your mates at kindy. I commend the bill to the House.