




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Single-Use Plastic Bags

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (10.11 am): In fewer than 50 days the Palaszczuk government's ban on single-use lightweight plastic shopping bags will commence in Queensland. I am proud to say that on Sunday, 1 July our state will take this important step forward to protect the environment. No-one can deny that we need to rethink the number of single-use plastic items we use in our everyday lives. It is easy to see the devastation that plastic pollution is causing. Plastic items made up around 38 per cent of the rubbish collected at last year's Clean Up Australia Day event and, alarmingly, around 75 per cent of the marine debris which is collected along Queensland's coastline is plastic waste.

Together, we can tackle plastic pollution and protect Queensland's environment, waterways and wildlife. It starts with this ban on single-use plastic shopping bags. Queenslanders use around one billion of these plastic shopping bags each year. If we laid these out end to end they would stretch from Coolangatta to the top of Cape York over 160 times. As members know, when the ban was introduced into parliament last September it was met with bipartisan support. It was also welcomed with great enthusiasm by environmental groups, local governments, and of course the broader community. Retailers have also embraced the ban and there are many exciting initiatives underway as they consider alternatives to single-use bags. Queensland is ready for this change.

I congratulate the many retailers, both small and large, across the state who have already moved away from plastic shopping bags. Whenever I buy my groceries, I take my reusable bags with me and I am pleased to see many others doing the same as we prepare for 1 July. The plastic bag ban will be followed later this year by another plastic litter reduction initiative, the container refund scheme. Our industry run scheme will be fit for purpose for Queensland and will deliver community, environmental and recycling benefits. Together, these two initiatives will have a positive impact on litter and plastic pollution right across our state.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to protecting our environment for future generations, and our work to reduce plastic pollution is helping us do just that.