



Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2019

**WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (WASTE LEVY) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (4.13 pm): I rise today to speak on the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Waste Levy) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. As the member for Ipswich, I support this waste levy. I thank the Minister for Environment and the Premier for their work in reintroducing this sensible policy to Queensland. The Newman LNP government's reckless removal of the waste levy in 2012 had a disastrous impact on this state. It resulted in Queensland becoming a cheap dumping ground for interstate waste, and it diverted investment away from Queensland's recycling industry. Evidence from other Australian jurisdictions and from countries overseas shows that introducing a waste levy has resulted in better management of waste resources and, importantly, the development of new waste recovery industries.

This bill has great significance for the Ipswich electorate. The 2017 investigation into the transport of waste into Queensland by the Hon. Peter Lyons reported that the majority of interstate waste coming across our border since 2012 has ended up in Ipswich waste facilities. Here in Queensland, we are also generating record amounts of waste, with no incentives in place to divert it to recycling and recovering processes. Waste facilities in the Ipswich local government area are accepting the bulk of this rubbish. The Remondis landfill at Swanbank and the Ti Tree landfill at Willowbank both accept in excess of half a million tonnes per annum of putrescible waste, accounting for around one-quarter of the total waste disposed in Queensland. Two other major landfills in Ipswich that accept inert waste—the Cleanaway landfill at New Chum and Lantrak's Swanbank landfill—together accounted for another quarter of the total waste disposed in Queensland. South-East Queensland's landfill capacity is rapidly being consumed. If we continue on as 'business as usual', then our inert landfill capacity in South-East Queensland could run out by 2022 and the putrescible landfill capacity could run out by 2034.

Queensland has one of the lowest rates of waste recovery in Australia. Only 45 per cent of our waste was recovered in 2017-18. This is an alarming figure considering that in the same year Queensland generated a record 10.9 million tonnes of waste—an increase of 11 per cent on the previous year. The amount of waste we are generating in this state is actually increasing at a faster rate than our population growth. We have also seen a shocking 37 per cent increase in interstate waste, with 1.25 million tonnes crossing the Queensland border in 2017-18. In fact, since 2012, 3.5 million tonnes of waste has crossed our border, with most of it ending up in Ipswich landfill.

When the waste levy was removed by the LNP government, Queensland became fair game for interstate, profit driven waste operators and transporters. New recycling and recovering facilities that were set up when the Bligh government introduced the waste levy in 2011 were either mothballed or scaled back after the levy was scrapped in 2012. Businesses that invested in recycling and recovery suffered financially, and our rates of recycling across Queensland flatlined. Removing the levy in 2012 meant that Queensland missed out on a great economic opportunity to grow our recycling industry and in the process create more jobs in Queensland. As we heard from the minister, more than nine jobs are created for every 10,000 tonnes of waste that is recycled—whereas fewer than three jobs are created for the same amount of waste sent to landfill.

The removal of the waste levy by the LNP government has also had a demoralising impact on the electorate of Ipswich, with constituents telling me that they are concerned by the concentration of waste activity in the Ipswich area and the proposed expansion of waste facilities in New Chum, Swanbank and Willowbank. Constituents are worried about negative impacts on the local environment, air quality, their health and quality of life, social equity and property values. The need for a waste levy in Queensland cannot be understated and can no longer be ignored. We need it to stop the interstate trucks coming across our border, and we need it to kick-start investment in the recycling industry in Queensland.

The levy will form part of a comprehensive waste strategy for Queensland which includes a suite of initiatives to stimulate growth in the sector, including our government's own \$100 million Resource Recovery Industry Development Program. Considering the substantial amount already invested in Ipswich by the waste industry, I believe this waste levy presents a golden opportunity for Ipswich to become the centre of a thriving recycling and resource recovery industry in Queensland. This would be an industry that Ipswich people can feel proud of.

I commend the Minister for Environment and the Premier for reintroducing the waste levy to Queensland and for coordinating a broader waste management strategy for this state. Everybody I talk to in my electorate is managing their own household waste differently. It is incumbent on government to act and to move with this cultural shift that we are seeing in our community. I am really proud to be part of a government that is acting on this cultural change. I commend the bill to the House.