




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Single-Use Plastics; Fraser Island, Bushfire

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (9.59 am): It is the last straw for single-use plastics. The Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job, and this week we will reintroduce legislation to deliver on our commitment to Queenslanders to ban single-use plastic items. When it comes to protecting our environment and the jobs that depend on it, the Palaszczuk government has a strong track record. We banned single-use plastic bags, we introduced the highly successful Containers for Change program, and now we are taking the next important step of banning single-use plastics like straws and stirrers.

Importantly, we have consulted broadly to ensure that these changes reflect what Queenslanders want. In March 2020 we asked Queenslanders to decide the future of single-use plastics. The overwhelming majority were in favour of a ban, with 94 per cent of the 20,000 responders supporting the proposal to ban single-use plastic items. During the election campaign, our government committed to undertaking further consultation with the community and businesses about the inclusion of polystyrene containers in the ban. I am pleased to report to the House that consultation got underway this week on this important issue and will remain open until 15 January 2021. We want to allow businesses and the hospitality industry time to source appropriate products and for further consultation to occur. Importantly, this bill recognises the needs of the vulnerable members of the community. The bill has carefully considered the needs of people with a disability and those in aged care and health sectors by providing exemptions.

Queensland leads the country when it comes to protecting our environment. When it comes to tackling the issue of reducing plastics, the Palaszczuk government gets a big tick from WWF Australia, acknowledging that Queensland has raced ahead into first place with our action on single-use plastics. The Palaszczuk government is getting on with the job of reducing the devastating impact of plastic waste on marine life and the environment.

While I am on my feet, I would like to add to the update provided by the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services about the serious fire burning on K'gari. QFES and QPWS are on the ground working day and night to contain this fire and I want to commend their efforts. Our top priority remains the preservation of life and property, as well as protecting this World Heritage listed icon. I have been in regular contact with the Mayor of Fraser Coast and I have spoken with him this morning. I will continue to ensure that the community is kept up to date as this emergency response continues.