




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2020

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (PLASTIC ITEMS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (12.22 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and the statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Health and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020 [344](#).

Tabled paper: Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020, explanatory notes [345](#).

Tabled paper: Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020, statement of compatibility with human rights [346](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020. This bill was introduced in the previous term of parliament and lapsed upon dissolution of the Legislative Assembly. No changes have been made to the bill.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to reducing plastic pollution and the devastating impact it has on our environment. Last year our government released the Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan with the commitment to ban the supply of single-use plastic items, starting with straws, cutlery, plates and stirrers. This bill will deliver that positive next step and also makes it possible for other plastic items to be banned in the future following a consultation process.

During the consultation period—the plastic items covered in this bill—we saw strong community support from across the state with nearly 20,000 submissions received; 94 per cent of these submissions supported the introduction of the ban. Across Queensland we have seen small businesses and communities embrace sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics. Whether it is the Straw No More campaign in Cairns and Townsville or the Boomerang Alliance's work with the Plastic Free Places program in Noosa, Townsville and Cairns, Queensland is embracing a sustainable way forward. This bill will continue their great work and reduce the impact plastic has on our waterways, marine life and the environment. This is the next step in our war on plastic waste.

Single-use plastic items often end up as litter in the environment or as landfill. That is why this bill introduces a ban on some of the most common single-use items in our community. The bill also recognises that continued access to a single-use plastic item such as a straw is important for some members of our community with a permanent or temporary disability to meet their healthcare needs. Exempt businesses, including pharmacies, hospitals, schools and medical and dental clinics, will be able to continue purchasing and providing single-use plastic items to those who need them.

We are also looking ahead, because during the consultation period there were many submissions for other items to be banned, including expanded polystyrene takeaway containers and cups. During the recent state election our government made a commitment to undertake consultation on including

polystyrene in this first tranche of single-use items to be banned. I am pleased to inform the House that this public consultation has commenced, with a survey now available for people to have their say until 15 January 2021.

In recognition of the fact that this has been a difficult year for many small businesses in the hospitality sector, the ban's start date will be no earlier than 1 September 2021. We will confirm the start date once the bill passes in early 2021. This date recognises business recovery from COVID-19 impacts, providing sufficient time for impacted sectors and businesses to source alternative suppliers and use stock on hand. I note, however, that many businesses have already made the shift away from these single-use plastic items.

The Palaszczuk government has a strong history of taking action to reduce plastic waste and pollution. First was the ban on lightweight single-use plastic shopping bags in 2018. Then we introduced the very successful container refund scheme, which has seen more than 2.5 billion containers returned and over 700 jobs created across Queensland. I am pleased to introduce this bill, which builds on the Palaszczuk government's exemplary record in reducing plastic waste. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. MAJ SCANLON (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (12.25 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Health and Environment Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Environment Committee.