




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (PLASTIC ITEMS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.50 pm): In speaking to the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill, can I start with where we were on the weekend with Clean Up Australia Day. It was quite concerning to see the amount of rubbish in our communities through the Clean Up Australia Day event. I reflected in parliament earlier this week about the amount of glass I saw for the first time in a long time. These glass bottles had been thrown out of car windows, and this obviously presents an environmental problem as well as a safety issue for kids and families riding pushbikes, running or walking along the side of the road.

I went to the Clean Up Australia Day event organised by the Currimundi Catchment Care Group, and I congratulate all the troops at the Currimundi Catchment Care Group who organised the Clean Up Australia Day event. They had about 30 local residents and they are always putting their best foot forward—whether it is planting trees, participating in Clean Up Australia Day or educating our community on aspects of the environment. It is all great to see.

I then had the pleasure on Monday night during this parliamentary sitting week of attending the monthly meeting of the Currimundi Catchment Care Group via Zoom. One of the benefits from the challenges over the last 12 months with COVID has been the use of technology and how a lot more people and groups are doing things online, so it was great that I was able to attend their meeting from parliament. Ordinarily, they would have had that meeting in a school library that I could not have attended because parliament was sitting. I passed on my thanks to the community for having my wife, Sally, and I for their Clean Up Australia Day event.

There was a lot of rubbish, and I guess I feel two things when I participate in Clean Up Australia Day. Firstly, I love making our community look beautiful and supporting our local community group but, secondly, there is a sense that people think, ‘Why are we cleaning up other people’s rubbish?’ I think everyone who has participated in Clean Up Australia Day and has seen the piles and piles of rubbish—and it is big rubbish too, like bicycles, in Currimundi Lake or Mooloolah River—questions why they are cleaning up other people’s rubbish. The simple reality is that there are people who have no regard for where they live, no regard for other people and no regard for the environment. That is the sad state of affairs that we are in. What we must do is continue to have these events like Clean Up Australia Day so we can encourage people to put their rubbish in the bin and not throw it out a window. Wouldn’t it be great if we never had to have Clean Up Australia Day again because people used rubbish bins? If that happened, our communities could be doing other things. I just wanted to reflect on those comments around Clean Up Australia Day.

I know the Friends of Currimundi Lake also helped out on Clean Up Australia Day around Currimundi Lake, which was great, and that was also well attended. Years ago I stood at Currimundi Lake and called for the government of the day to introduce the container deposit scheme. I stood with the Sunshine Coast Environment Council and representatives from the Currimundi Catchment Care Group, and we called on the government to introduce it. This was even before the LNP announced the policy in that regard. I thought that if South Australia could run successful recycle programs like cash

for containers then our local scouting groups and so forth should be able to have the same opportunity. We then announced that LNP policy, and I was very pleased that the government copied the policy. We will give credit where credit is due. The government of the day were the government of the day, and they copied the container deposit scheme and we now have the Containers for Change scheme which is doing some great things and providing fundraising opportunities. It is helping and saving the environment while also raising money for charities.

I have just read of some examples of this on my Facebook post. The Bells church in Caloundra West has used cash for containers to raise over \$3,000 and that money has gone to swimming lessons, chaplaincy programs and food and gift vouchers during the COVID crisis. I am advised that Allison Dean from the Sunshine Coast has been collecting and donating to a Bali street kids project using cash for containers. I know that one of my local schools—Talara Primary College—have quite a system with their cash for containers. They have a volunteer in the P&C dubbed the 'Bin Chicken'. Every Monday, the 'Bin Chicken' has a trailer out the front of Talara Primary College and the students and parents bring a week's worth of containers to the trailer. They have raised thousands and thousands of dollars which they are putting back into their school community, so I congratulate Talara Primary College and all the other schools in our area.

I see this bill as an extension of what we did in this parliament years ago with Containers for Change and recycling—and we are now banning single-use plastic items of straws, plates, cutlery and stirrers. Obviously, the LNP is supporting this practical environmental step today. Can I say for the record though—and I do not think anyone has admitted this—with the great entrepreneurs and inventors we have in the state of Queensland I hope and pray for the day when someone can design a paper straw that actually is enjoyable to drink out of. I see ministers laughing but they have all experienced this. I saw a member yesterday having a milkshake, and by time they got up five flights of stairs the straw had disintegrated and it had flopped over. I am just stating the bleeding obvious. It is all very good with hand on heart to say that we are all for banning plastic straws, but I encourage our entrepreneurial Queenslanders to come up with a good recyclable biodegradable straw.

When I recently went to the Kawana cinemas—and they have been a good business and they have got rid of their plastic straws—my children and I were at the counter and the very nice lady said, 'I would encourage you to take three straws with your slurpees because you will need three paper straws to get through the movie,' and we did which is unfortunate. I just plead with any entrepreneurs out there who can actually develop a great—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: You cannot reuse these paper straws, but you can reuse metal straws and so forth so we may do that next time. I just wanted to place that on the record because I know everyone has experienced it but no-one has had the guts to say it today. I think there is some more reform to go in that space.

I also want to thank some great groups in the Kawana electorate and on the Sunshine Coast. The Ocean Crusaders are doing an amazing job with what they are doing in cleaning up our oceans and waterways. I have mentioned the Currimundi Catchment Care Group and Friends of Currimundi Lake. I give a shout-out to turtle watch groups. My Kawana electorate is mostly a coastal electorate and we have two or three really good havens for sea turtles that come in and breed and lay their eggs. I thank all of our turtle watch groups.

We have a great duo of Zac and Olivia, who set up SeaFrame Australia. They are going right around the Sunshine Coast and they are two great young entrepreneurs on the Sunshine Coast who are educating the public about the environment and picking up litter and rubbish and taking it away with you. As I have a mostly coastal electorate, I see that on the waterways a lot of the time with fishing gear that is left behind. We all can take practical measures to help save our environment for the future and educate other people.

I have a great mate on the Sunshine Coast called Marty Perkins. Marty saw this years ago and he has a great business story. He was on the Sunshine Coast and it was pouring down rain and he saw a plastic coffee lid floating down the drain which ended up in the stormwater. He then started researching coffee cups and coffee lids. For a few years now, he has been running Biodegradable Catering Supplies. He has coffee cups which are in heaps of cafes not only on the Sunshine Coast but on the Gold Coast and in the hinterland. It is a biodegradable coffee cup made of sugarcane mulch and all sorts of other stuff, but so too is the lid because that was one of the biggest issues. A lot of people were making biodegradable and compostable cups but the lids were still plastic, so he created this.

Can I say for the record that I have no beneficial or financial interests in my friend's business. I am just a good friend supporting him because he is supporting the environment. He has his motto on his website and it says 'Helping businesses protect our planet'. I think that says it all and sums it up—

from a guy on the Sunshine Coast who saw a plastic lid floating down the stormwater drain and then set up a successful business supplying better coffee cups in our communities. Lots of cafes are taking up that opportunity as well. I thank him for that.

I encourage our community to always take practical steps and to join our local environment groups. The Currimundi Catchment Care Group and the Friends of Currimundi Lake take practical steps in terms of the environment. As I said, I was among the first people on the Sunshine Coast along with my colleagues to advocate for the cash for container recycling scheme. We lobbied for it. We in the LNP announced it. Then the government introduced it and we supported that legislation's passage through the parliament.

I say thank you to my community for their collective efforts in helping our planet and making it the very best for future generations, as we were all taught when we were at school. We will do our part on this side of the House to achieve that objective so we can have the very best planet to live on, which is what we all want.