




Speech By  
**Joan Pease**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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## **WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (PLASTIC ITEMS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (6.23 pm): It is always delightful to listen to the member for Southport as he wanders off the long title of the bill. It is really wonderful to hear how committed he is to the environment. I hope that all of his colleagues on the other side of the House follow his great lead. Then perhaps we can get some climate change commitment from that side of the House. I thank the member for Southport.

I am delighted to stand to speak in support of the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020. I am so proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government, because our government is committed to reducing plastic pollution and the devastating impact it has on our environment. The magnificent Moreton Bay Marine Park borders my electorate, and we Baysiders are justifiably proud of this magnificent marine park, as we are of the Ramsar listed wetland and bird roosts. Whether enjoying a lovely walk or a ride along the foreshore, dragon boating with the Manly Dragon Boat Club, dining in one of the many sensational cafes and restaurants, sailing, kitesurfing or stand-up paddleboarding, my community love the bay, and we love the wildlife that relies on a healthy environment. From dugongs to turtles, from sugar gliders to the Ramsar listed birds, it is so important that we protect this important system.

The Plastic Pollution Reduction Plan is a 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. It also makes it possible for other plastic items to be banned in the future following a consultation process. Consultation for the plastic items covered in this bill saw strong community support across the state, with nearly 20,000 submissions received. Some 94 per cent of those submissions supported the introduction of the ban.

Across Queensland I know that small businesses and communities have embraced sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics, whether it was 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. Many of my local traders have embraced environmentally friendly food container options. 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. At my Clean Up Australia day event at Wynnum Creek on the weekend we saw locals come out to pick up rubbish and litter. It was great to see a marked decrease in plastic bags, cans and plastic bottles in the rubbish that was collected. As a follow-on from the good work in banning single-use plastic bags and the Containers for Change program, we now need to remove single-use plastic items that too often end up as litter in the environment or in landfill. We collected plenty of them from Wynnum Creek on the weekend. That is why this bill introduces a ban on some of the most common single-use plastic 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, so 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.

The Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020 will amend the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 to provide for the introduction of a ban on single-use plastic items. The ban will commence with single-use plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery and plates, with proposed amendment to the bill to include expanded polystyrene takeaway food containers and cups. The bill also provides for additional items to be banned in regulation following a robust consultation and assessment process.

The consultation regulatory impact statement released on 13 March 2020 initially proposed a start date of 1 July 2021 for the ban. This was supported through the initial consultation in mid-2020 by 90 per cent of the submissions. This date was identified before the full extent and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were known and fully appreciated. Through the more recent consultation conducted from 30 November 2020 to 15 January 2021 there was again strong support for the ban to commence this year, proposing that this take place no earlier than 1 September 2021. It is envisaged that this would provide the community and businesses a minimum of six months to prepare for the ban, as advised by the stakeholder advisory group, which includes, among others, representatives from the retail and hospitality sectors. This period would ordinarily allow businesses to source alternatives, decrease stock on hand of the banned items and not incur unnecessary compliance costs if they are not able to sell or give away the banned items to exempt businesses.

Just over one year into the pandemic, COVID-19 impacts on businesses continue and Queensland businesses are still recovering from these impacts. Business closures due to the pandemic would have limited the ability for businesses to appropriately manage the stock on hand in preparation of the ban, and of course the COVID pandemic has also impacted on global supply chains. This may also impact the availability of businesses to source alternatives where alternatives are not locally available.

The bill recognises these impacts and enables the commencement date of the ban to be fixed by proclamation. As part of the government's plan for economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the start date for the ban is flexible and will be no earlier than 1 September 2021. Like young Theo, who helped me clean up last weekend, I want to make sure that our environment is clean, it is safe and it is free of single-use plastic items to protect our local wildlife for future generations. I commend the bill to the House.