




Speech By  
**Lance McCallum**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 March 2021

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

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (11.41 am): I rise to speak in support of this bill. It is the latest step in the Palaszczuk government's strong commitment to waste reduction and protecting our environment. By banning single-use plastics like straws, stirrers, cutlery and plates, we are taking the next steps towards a cleaner, greener Queensland. The Queensland waste strategy provides a framework to reduce the amount of waste produced and ultimately disposed of by promoting more sustainable waste management practices for business, industry and households. This is exactly what this bill will help achieve.

I would like to see Queensland become a zero waste society, where waste is avoided, reused and recycled to the greatest possible extent. Today we continue that journey with more proactive measures to reduce waste and make a very real difference to our environment and the jobs that depend on it. Last year Queenslanders told us this is what they want. We asked Queenslanders to decide the future of single-use plastics, and overwhelming they were in favour of a ban. In fact, 94 per cent of the almost 20,000 respondents supported the proposal. Now we are delivering. This bill will ban the supply and sale of single-use plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery and plates. Importantly, the bill recognises the needs of vulnerable Queenslanders and considers the needs of the disability, aged-care and health sectors by providing appropriate exemptions.

Last year's public consultation process showed there was also strong support for banning other single-use plastics like expanded polystyrene takeaway food containers and cups. I am extremely pleased that the minister has brought forward an amendment to this effect. There are preferred alternatives to these products available that are far less harmful to our environment. The start date for a ban on single-use plastics will be no earlier than 1 September this year—giving our businesses time to source appropriate replacement products like paper straws, bamboo cutlery and plates and wooden drink stirrers.

Waste is an issue that is being discussed not only in Queensland but also across the nation. The Palaszczuk government has acted to help reduce waste and protect our environment. We banned single-use plastic bags, removing about 900 million bags a year from landfill. Then we introduced the hugely successful Containers for Change program that has seen more than 150 million containers recycled in our local Ipswich community and over \$15 million paid to Ipswich residents, boosting our economy as we continue our safe and strong recovery from the COVID pandemic. More than 193,000 Queenslanders are now registered for the scheme, which has helped create more than 650 new jobs across the state. Studies show more than a 35 per cent reduction in container litter since the hugely successful program was launched.

It was our government that also reintroduced the waste levy after it was scrapped—the same levy the opposition and One Nation voted against.

**Mr Millar** interjected.

**Mr McCALLUM:** This has resulted in an almost 60 per cent reduction in the volume of waste coming into Queensland from interstate.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Order! Members to my left. Member for Gregory, member for Condamine and member for Warrego, cease interjecting.

**Mr McCALLUM:** Without this levy we would have reopened the floodgates for interstate dumpers. Waste is an important issue in our community that comes with considerable legacy and involves all levels of government. I take this opportunity to reiterate that the proposal to build a waste-to-energy facility at Swanbank is not appropriate for our rapidly growing community. A job-creating, state-of-the-art recycling facility would be better for our community and our economy or the project should be moved to a more suitable location away from our fast-growing, highly populated area. There needs to be greater focus on avoiding the creation of waste altogether, alongside reuse and recycling. We need less waste and more job-creating recycling which is better for our community, the environment and the economy. That is exactly what this bill helps achieve by banning single-use plastics.

We have also invested nearly \$27 million in recycling projects that will create jobs and support businesses in the resource recovery sector while reducing the amount of rubbish sent to landfill, which I am proud to say includes local projects in Ipswich. We expect this to support the creation of more than 300 new jobs, see more than 957,000 tonnes of rubbish diverted from landfill each year and result in \$126 million in additional capital investment into the Queensland economy. Our holistic approach to waste—both in terms of rubbish reduction and infrastructure investment—will help ensure our stunning Queensland environment is protected and preserved for future generations to enjoy. I commend the bill to the House.