




Speech By  
**Hon. Leanne Linard**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGEES**

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

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.16 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill. The bill aims to ban the supply of single-use plastic items including straws, plates, cutlery and stirrers. This is the Palaszczuk government's latest tranche of reforms proving our commitment to the environment by banning single-use plastic items. Most of the time, if these items do not end up in landfill they will end up in the environment as litter. This ban on the items contained in the bill is consistent with similar bans either announced or introduced in legislation in the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia.

A single-use plastic items consultation regulatory impact statement was released in March last year. Nearly 20,000 submissions were received from people across Queensland. An incredible 94 per cent supported the introduction of a ban on these single-use plastic items, with 90 per cent of those wanting the ban to start as soon as possible. I understand, however, that, due to the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses, in particular in the hospitality sector, the start date of the ban will be no earlier than 1 September this year.

I acknowledge that some members of our community rely on single-use items such as straws because of their healthcare needs. This was also highlighted in the submissions, with 50 per cent supporting the option of allowing healthcare businesses such as pharmacies and hospitals to still be able to provide plastic straws. I was pleased to see that the bill provides a list of exempted entities that will be able to continue providing these items to the people who need them.

We need to and can do better to protect our wonderful environment. The children and young people in my electorate are demanding action. It is something they raise with me every time I go into a school in my electorate of Nudgee. It is something they raise in emails, and they also send me letters about how important it is that we protect the environment for them and future generations. In this regard I recently met with a 13-year-old, Keira, who has created the Keira Project on Instagram. When she is not at school Keira dedicates her time to raising awareness and helping our environment. She particularly is focused on reducing the harmful impacts of plastic on our marine animals. I want to send her a shout-out. She is a beautiful young lady—and I think very courageous to start that Instagram page—who cares about something bigger than the many things that a young girl at school already has on her mind. A shout-out to you, Keira.

I suspect that protecting the environment will also be a top priority for my soon-to-be-established Nudgee Youth Advisory Committee. I look forward to hearing their views about what more we can do to protect our environment. The most recent Queensland Annual Youth Statement noted that since 2018 the proportion of young Queenslanders reporting the environment as a key national issue has more than tripled, from 8.8 per cent to 31 per cent, further highlighting how important the environment is to our young people.

As I have mentioned in this place many times before, the Nudgee electorate is home to two very important environmental areas—Nudgee Beach and Boondall Wetlands—1,500 hectares of tidal flats, mangroves, salt marshes, melaleuca wetlands, grasslands and open forest. The wetlands have a diversity of wildlife including flying foxes, possums, squirrel gliders, frogs and reptiles. It also offers habitats for more than 190 species of birds. Each year around 40,000 migratory shore birds feed on the food-rich mudflats and roost in the salt marshes and mangroves along the shore. They travel to Moreton Bay each spring from as far away as Siberia, Japan, Mongolia and Alaska.

The international importance of wetland areas within Moreton Bay was recognised when sections of the bay and surrounds were designated as a Ramsar site in 1993. Ramsar is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. In 1996 the then member for Lilley Wayne Swan worked with Jim Soorley, Brisbane's lord mayor at the time, to lobby the federal government to add an extra 500 hectares to the reserve. This is something that I know my community was very grateful for and always remembers and, I suspect from its tremendous popularity, so were our neighbours in the greater Brisbane area grateful.

Two minutes down the road from the Boondall Wetlands and the Nudgee Beach Reserve is the Nudgee Resource Recovery Centre, or the dump. It is one of four within the Brisbane City Council boundaries. While it is sad that many single-use plastic items will end up there in landfill, plenty of items are just as likely to end up right down the road in ecologically important habitat. We know that the Palaszczuk government's previous legislation to ban single-use plastic bags and introduce the container deposit scheme has made a difference. Sunday was Clean Up Australia Day during which hundreds of people from my electorate were doing their bit to keep our beautiful part of the world free of waste. I have been told that this year there were more groups out than ever before, but more importantly there was a significantly noticeable drop in the number of bottles and cans in our waterways and parklands.

As the mother of two young boys, I want them to grow up in a Queensland that is clean and free of harmful waste. Adding the ban of single-use plastic items to the already existing ban on single-use plastic bags is another step towards making this a reality. I commend our Minister for the Environment on her stewardship in this regard and look forward to seeing the many advancements that she will make in her portfolio. I commend the bill to the House.