




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Waste, Management Reports

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (2.12 pm): Last week was National Recycling Week—a time to raise awareness about cutting our impact on our environment by reducing waste and increasing resource recovery. The most exciting part of the week for me, as shadow environment minister, which is probably admittedly a reflection on my definition of exciting, was the release of two major reports from the most significant players in our waste system—the industry body WRIQ and the Council of Mayors SEQ which cover most of where our state's waste is being made.

Both reports clearly showed the state government is not on track to reach its targets. They exposed a lack of policy direction from the environment minister on what could be the most significant reforms to rubbish collection in a generation. The first was the Waste Recycling Industry Association Queensland's report titled *Untangling Queensland's waste levy conundrum*, which I will table for the benefit of members.

Tabled paper: WRIQ report, dated November 2021, titled 'Untangling Queensland's Waste Levy Conundrum: WRIQ's proposal to create equitable solutions for Queensland' [1967](#).

It said—

The Queensland Government's current approach sees us lagging behind almost every jurisdiction in Australia on several fronts ...

It also states that the government—

... appears to be largely focused on maintaining the status quo rather than tackling Queensland's waste challenges.

That status quo has us as one of the worst performing states for recycling in Australia.

The report shows the waste levy under its current settings is just a tax grab for the state government. If we look at the \$100 million in infrastructure funding from the levy to help improve the system, over \$811 million in applications from 289 businesses were received but still only a third of the fund was spent. WRIQ's report shows that those businesses on average spent \$11,000 applying for these grants, making the mismanagement and failure to roll it out even more disappointing. It also highlighted key government reports being released late or not at all. The *Queensland waste & resource recovery infrastructure report* came out over 600 days after it was handed to the state government and only after I requested it at estimates. This secrecy leads to uncertainty and confusion within the waste industry.

The second report was CoMSEQ's waste management plan. It showed that the direction of our waste system is not being driven by our environment minister. In the absence of a clear organics strategy, the major South-East Queensland councils have stepped up and laid out a plan. Again, it clearly showed the current approach of this seven-year-old government will mean we will not reach our waste targets.

These local governments have outdone the government's draft organics strategy because they have released an actual strategy with a detailed plan to transition to FOGO. Organics is such a big opportunity that the state cannot afford to vacate the space on policy. Councils manage our waste at a practical level, but the state government frames the broader policy, set targets, supports infrastructure and can improve education statewide. I urge the minister to take this seriously and to listen to these reports so Queensland can get to where we need to on this key environmental area.

(Time expired)