




Speech By  
**Steve Minnikin**

**MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH**

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

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.45 pm): Often we come in here and engage in the argy-bargy of debate across the chamber, but occasionally we will debate legislation, such as the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020, that makes eminent sense. I note that a lot of speakers have paid tribute to people in their local communities who have been involved in Clean Up Australia Day activities. Before I go through some of the objectives of the bill, which have been well and truly outlined, I want to mention an event that I hosted in the Chatsworth electorate last Sunday morning for Clean Up Australia Day.

The event was held at the Carindale Recreation Reserve and involved an organisation called Nature Freedom. Nature Freedom is a group that caters for young people who are suffering from mental and physical disability. The event was a way of getting those people to engage with the community in a great cause. I could think of nothing better than getting involved with a group that is doing something practical, pragmatic and also very inclusive. I am very proud of the Nature Freedom organisation, which did a great job last Sunday. I take this opportunity to thank everyone who was involved in Clean Up Australia Day, which is well and truly a good thing.

Put simply, this is sensible and pragmatic legislation and, as plenty of speakers before me have said, we on this side of the chamber will be supporting it. I want to highlight a couple of the reasons why I think it is important. I remember when I was a kid—a long time ago, in my case—there was a saying that encouraged you to think globally but to act locally. That catchcry resonated with me many years ago, when I was not as follicly challenged as I am now.

I recall fishing on my beloved South Stradbroke Island. I believe one of the pioneers and influencers for all things practical and environmental was my granddad. He was a keen fisherperson. I remember many years ago when we went fishing we always made sure that we had a second krill bag. The primary one was for the feed, but the other one was to collect the flotsam and jetsam that washed up onto the beach. Nine times out of 10 it was plastic—not just fishing line but plastic bits and pieces. I roll the tape forward to 2021 and this bill is a continuation of practical legislation. We banned plastic bags and that was supported by both sides of the chamber. This ban on single-use plastics—or many of them—is long overdue.

I believe that if you want to be environmentally active and have a practical impact on your local environment you do not necessarily have to superglue yourself to the William Jolly Bridge. I know cruising was a pre-COVID activity, but hopefully it will happen again in the not-too-distant future. I suggest that if you are on a cruise liner, in between cocktails you should go onto the deck and look into the middle of the ocean. You may find what I found several years ago when I felt like I was at the local rubbish tip. I was on the *Pacific Dawn* in the middle of the Coral Sea and the number of plastic straws that I saw simply amazed me.

I go back to that saying ‘think globally, act locally’. It really does have an overall global impact, in your own small footprint kind of way. A few years ago I had a wonderful holiday in Koh Samui, Thailand. Long may it reign. You can go to any stretch of the coastline; the beaches are not privately owned. As

many members would know, in certain parts of the world sections of beach are privately owned by hotel chains. I will not mention the name of the hotel at which we were staying, but it was a very well-known chain and brand. We observed that early in the morning, at five o'clock, they would be raking our section of beach clean. With the section of beach literally next door, the same approach was not taken and you could not even swim through the plastic straws. They were the No. 1 issue. They were not the only bit of flotsam and jetsam, but plastic straws were an absolute scourge.

I say well done to both the minister and the shadow minister. I think they are showing a level of political sophistication beyond their years. This is what we need to be doing more of. At the end of the day, all of us have a limited amount of time in this place. Some have longer than others. It is always good to be able to think back on moments like this: I was either part of contributing to the debate or part of the Legislative Assembly that set in train sensible, pragmatic legislation.

I also give a shout-out to the member who earlier paid tribute to the young lady who started this all off in her own little environmental way up in North Queensland. There was a meeting with the minister at the time, Minister Enoch. I often have schoolchildren from my electorate who visit this hallowed chamber, this chamber that I love so much, say to me, 'But how can we make some kind of real difference in the big world out there?' This is a classic example. Through the efforts of small children things can happen. I wish I knew her name, for *Hansard*—sadly, I do not—but I pay tribute to her as well.

Many people at the end of their contribution say that they commend the bill to the House. I will not be doing that, because it is the role of the minister to say those words. It is the minister who commends the bill to the House. I simply say that I am so happy to support the bill.