




Speech By
Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (PLASTIC ITEMS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (3.40 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020. I congratulate the government on introducing this bill and for following the policy lead that was established in 2016 by the LNP in relation to the container waste deposit scheme. Recently we heard the member for Macalister—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I can understand that for you, member for Logan. The member for Macalister spoke about her memories of handing back drink bottles at the local milk bar, which was a scheme much beloved by many people as well as Scouts and other charity organisations. It was part of the thought process behind the policy that we announced in May 2016. My friend the member for Moggill has already discussed that, as has the member for Southport. It continues to be a source of great pride to many on this side that we were able to advance that policy quite a long way and saw it taken up by the government, as was the policy to ban single-use plastic bags.

We see that being carried forward at the federal level with the National Waste Policy Action Plan. For the first time ever a national waste bill has passed through the federal parliament, shepherded by the federal member for Brisbane, Trevor Evans, the Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management. Indeed, he pushed not just for legislation but also for \$1 billion to go into the Recycling Modernisation Fund. Not only is there less waste going to landfill and less waste being put into our streams, waterways, parks and environment but also the waste that is necessarily being generated is being reused rather than being exported overseas, as it once was.

At local schools and in local organisations we see an increasing prevalence of people taking up the cause of the environment, particularly the cause of plastics in the environment. Last week I was fortunate enough to present the school leadership badges at a small school in my electorate, Hendra State School, which has about 65 students. The school announced a new category of leadership, the eco warriors. Three students were appointed as eco warriors and they will be responsible for ensuring that every day plastics and other waste is picked up from the school grounds. It is a challenge to reduce waste and single-use items such as plastic straws, cutlery and plates. I saw 'stirrers' mentioned and immediately thought of the member for Chatsworth—speak of the devil—but of course it refers to plastic stirrers for coffee cups. This challenge is increasingly being taken up and understood by all in the electorate.

Reducing plastic waste such as plastic straws is not only good for the environment; it makes good economic sense. To use less of any resource is a good thing. It saves money for the consumer, it saves money for the corporation and it saves money for the state. It saves you money when you would otherwise have to take that rubbish to the tip or the dump or put in your rubbish bin. It makes sound economic sense in that respect. It also provides opportunities for increased activities in recycling industries.

When you visit a recycling centre—and I have visited quite a few—you see the amount of work and jobs created through recycling. You see people scanning the material. They work on the lines as the material is pushed through, separating the various items. That is another solid reason why this sort of legislation is necessary. Often working on those lines are people for whom otherwise getting a job would be difficult. Those jobs are entirely suited to what they want to do and what they can achieve. They provide them with avenues to earn an income, have a life and make a contribution to society in ways that they would otherwise find difficult and that society or the community would have to pay for through social services.

There are a whole range of benefits from this legislation and I am very happy to see it being brought forward. I am very happy to see that it is supported by our shadow minister for the environment, who has spoken eloquently on all of these matters. It is a sound recognition of the steps that are being taken by all in the community, in this parliament and in the federal parliament to acknowledge that what we have done in the past is not the way we can continue to do things into the future and that this change is needed.