




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 10 March 2021

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (PLASTIC ITEMS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (2.46 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Amendment Bill 2020. This bill is an important step forward for our state as it strengthens our environmental protection laws to preserve our wonderful natural environment. Primarily, the legislation before us today bans the use of single-use plastic items. These items include plastic straws, plastic stirrers, plastic plates and plastic cutlery. These are all items which, if not disposed of correctly, end up in our waterways, rivers and bays, including the beautiful Moreton Bay which surrounds my electorate of Redcliffe.

We know that single-use plastics are everywhere. You just have to walk down any aisle in your local supermarket to see many products which use single-use plastics. Unfortunately, you only need to walk down your footpaths and local streets to see it all over the ground. I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government, which last term banned the use of single-use plastic bags. I am pleased that my community of Redcliffe, and indeed all Queensland, has got on board and adapted to the new way of shopping. I know that my re-usable shopping bags are a hit in Redcliffe. I see people using them when I am out and about. My message is that if you live in Redcliffe and do not have one of my re-usable shopping bags please feel free to drop by my electorate office.

I am advised that during the consultation phase of this legislation there were over 19,600 submissions received with around 94 per cent supporting the introduction of the ban. I know that many in my community of Redcliffe are supportive of this ban, as it will continue our positive steps forward in preserving our pristine wildlife. This bill will also provide for a head of power to enable other materials to be banned in the future after extensive consultation via regulation.

I know that the Minister for Environment has been consulting widely and an amendment has been circulated to extend the ban to polystyrene items, which was an election commitment by the Palaszczuk Labor government. This is a really important step forward. I have seen so much polystyrene around my waterways in the Moreton Bay over the years. We know that COVID-19 has been difficult for many, including our businesses and our economy. That is why the Palaszczuk government has listened and will ensure that the ban does not start any earlier than 1 September 2021 to ensure businesses are able to get themselves ready. After that, fines will apply. Our amendment is too precious not to take it seriously.

Like many members, over the weekend I joined my local community groups to do our bit in cleaning up our community. I have been doing it for many years. I have been pleased to say that each year our community continues to get behind Clean Up Australia Day. I would like to say that each year we find less and less rubbish, but unfortunately that is not the case. This year I joined members of the Redcliffe community to clean up Hays Inlet Silcock Street Reserve. We had an excellent turnout and collected a lot of rubbish, including an old bike, scrap metal and materials, a battery and a lot of single-use plastics in all manners and forms.

The Palaszczuk government is determined to ensure that Queensland has the right environmental laws to protect our environment into the future, and the bill before us today to ban single-use plastics and polystyrene items is the right move. While I am on my feet, I want to give a shout-out to the Redcliffe Environmental Forum and Pristine Peninsula—two amazing groups on the Redcliffe Peninsula which are dedicated to making our environment a better place.

A few weeks ago I joined our local councillor, Councillor Karl Winchester from the Moreton Bay Regional Council, with Pristine Peninsula to help launch the Love Our Clontarf Litter Campaign. The mighty Pristine Peninsula organised a bold 100-day plan to reduce litter in a two-kilometre litter hotspot on the Redcliffe Peninsula. This campaign is called Love Our Clontarf. It is designed to not only clean up our local community from rubbish; it is designed to create awareness about the importance of looking after our environment. I encourage all members of our Redcliffe community, residents, visitors and local businesses to not only get behind this local campaign in Clontarf but also continue each and every day to look after our environment. I encourage everyone to support this bill, and I commend the bill to the House.