



Speech By
Jim Madden

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

Record of Proceedings, 23 May 2023

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL



Mr MADDEN (Ipswich West—ALP) (5.42 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, which was introduced to the Queensland parliament on 22 February 2023, as well as the amendments proposed by the minister. The Palaszczuk government is focused on reducing the amount of waste that goes into landfill while bringing down greenhouse gas emissions and creating more jobs in Queensland's recycling and resource recovery industries. The bill will amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 to better embed the goals for and practical implementation of circular economy principles.

The bill also amends the definition of 'waste'. The new definition is broad and includes anything that is left over or unwanted from an industrial, commercial, domestic or other activity or surplus to the activity generating the waste. However, importantly, the new definition carves out 'things prescribed by regulation not to be waste' and 'resources generated by compliance with an end-of-waste code'. The purpose of this amendment is to provide security and flexibility for those who want to invest in circular economy processes and products. Under the new definition, the pathway for repurposing different types of materials is intended to be clearer.

On 11 December 2021, the Queensland government announced its intention to remove the clean earth levy exemption to come into effect on 1 July 2023, following the first-stage review of the efficacy of the waste levy. Clean earth is a valuable product used for things like retaining walls, filling and landscaping. Introducing a levy for the disposal of this material to landfill recognises the importance of beneficial re-use of this material. Of note for landfill and waste facility operators is that an exemption may be available for landfill operators to take in clean earth and use it for good operation and maintenance of their site. This move to narrowing the scope of waste exemptions is consistent with the existing provisions of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2011 that phase out the exemptions for road planings as from 30 June 2023, alum sludge from 30 June 2024 and fly ash produced by power stations from 30 June 2029.

The waste recovery and recycling industries contribute \$1.5 billion to our state's economy each year and support over 12,000 jobs. As the minister said so well in her introductory speech—

We have set an ambitious but achievable target to halve our food waste, to stop 80 per cent of material from ending up in landfill and to recycle 65 per cent of our rubbish by 2030. That is why our \$1.1 billion Recycling and Jobs Fund will be investing in new green bins for households, rolling out statewide behaviour change campaigns and co-investing with councils and industry to deliver even more recycling infrastructure across the state, because when a product is no longer useful or required for its initial purpose we want it to be re-used, recycled or remanufactured right here in Queensland.

On 1 July 2022 the Queensland government announced its intention to ban the mass release of lighter-than-air balloons, to commence on 1 September 2023, following consultation to expand the ban on single-use plastics. The bill also makes provision for the chief executive to make a decision about

amending or suspending a resource recovery area declaration or making a payment to a local government. The bill makes provision to include the circular economy principle as a principle under the waste act. It will change the review date for the waste recovery strategy from three to five years, and provide an expiry of 31 December 2025 for the exemption from the ban for an otherwise banned single-use plastic item that is integral to a shelf-ready product.

In closing, I note that in its report tabled in April 2023 the Health and Environment Committee made only one recommendation: that the bill be passed. I would like to thank the committee, the committee secretariat, Hansard and the submitters. I commend the bill to the House and support the amendments proposed by the minister.