




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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**WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (5.00 pm): Happy World Turtle Day 2023! I would like to start on a very positive note, particularly after that story of doom and gloom about the terrible track record we have as the government here in Queensland. It is disappointing to sit and listen to this rhetoric that ‘everything’s bad; you’ve done a terrible job’. The Palaszczuk Labor government has introduced an exceptional amount of great environmental policy, and it is alarming to have to listen to the rot that is being rolled out by that side. Let’s not forget that this is the team that got rid of the waste levy that the Labor government introduced.

Excuse me, Mr Deputy Speaker, there is someone filming parliament on their phone just there. They are not allowed to do that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Lytton, thank you. You may continue.

Ms PEASE: I thought it was a breach of standing orders to do that. I would like to report that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have raised the point and we are having a look at it.

Ms PEASE: Again, happy World Turtle Day! That side over there was responsible for removing the waste levy. Terrific work! So after all of the great work the previous Labor government did to reduce waste, Queensland then became the dumping ground for all of Australia. Companies could drive up over the border and dump all of their waste. We have reintroduced the waste levy. I will give a tiny example of some of the great things we have done: we introduced the Containers for Change scheme. That has helped so many charity organisations across Queensland. It is sensational. Those are the positive things we have done—not all the naysaying and doom and gloom—and we continue to do great things.

The Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will amend the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 and the Environmental Protection Act 1994. The bill gives effect to a decision announced on 11 November 2021 to remove the automatic levy exemption for clean earth delivered to a leviable waste disposal site. The clean earth levy exemption has been in place since 1 July 2019, when the disposal levy was reintroduced. Between 1 July 2019 and 1 July 2022, more than 3.9 million tonnes of clean earth was delivered to leviable waste disposal sites. Removing the general exemption incentivises the re-use of clean earth over disposal.

That is really a great piece of legislation because it means that, instead of dumping good quality earth, it can be used for purposes such as resurfacing football fields and upgrading yards and foot paths in property development areas. This will also bring Queensland’s treatment of clean earth into line with levy frameworks in other states and territories. A landfill operator will be able to apply for an operational purpose exemption for using earth and material for things like landfill day cover without this earth attracting a levy liability.

The bill also gives effect to an announcement made on 1 July 2022 banning the release of lighter-than-air balloons, which will commence on 1 September 2023. As the member for Thuringowa said, it is not banning balloons; it is banning the release of helium balloons, not the balloons themselves. The bill will amend the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act to introduce a ban on the outdoor release of these lighter-than-air balloons.

I am particularly pleased about this ban. My electorate is surrounded by the magnificent Moreton Bay Marine Park, so I am particularly happy to talk about this on World Turtle Day. The Moreton Bay Marine Park is seen as Brisbane's playground. It is a place for fishing, boating and enjoying the outdoor Queensland lifestyle. The marine park is also home to hundreds of important species. They live in a complex web, depending on each other for food and shelter. Some of these plants and animals are under pressure from human and other impacts. A number of plans and strategies are in place to ensure the long-term survival of these threatened species, including the Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan.

Moreton Bay Marine Park has the highest recorded diversity and abundance of resident and transient cetaceans in Australia. Humpback whales visit Moreton Bay Marine Park when migrating to and from their southern feeding grounds between June and October. Eight species of dolphins have already been recorded in the park including two resident species: the bottlenose and the Australian humpback dolphin. Throughout the year other species are also known to visit the marine park, including: killer whales, southern right whales, sperm whales, melon-headed whales, minke whales, common dolphins, spinner dolphins and Risso's dolphins.

Moreton Bay Marine Park is also home to many shorebirds, which make up about 10 per cent of Australia's bird species. Most breed in the Northern Hemisphere, and about 40,000 shorebirds migrate to Moreton Bay Marine Park each year. Many others reside permanently in the park, which is where my electorate sits. The dugong, which is the only plant-eating mammal that lives its entire life in the marine environment, also lives in Moreton Bay. They feed exclusively on seagrass, which is a flowering plant found throughout the shallow banks of Moreton Bay Marine Park. The marine park has over 120 different species of coral and is home to the turtle—Happy Turtle Day again—and the grey nurse shark.

That is why the ban on the release of lighter-than-air balloons is so important to the magnificent Moreton Bay Marine Park and all that live within it. Following community, industry and business consultation showing strong support to expand the ban on single-use plastics, a ban on the mass release of lighter-than-air balloons was announced to commence 1 September 2023. Balloons have a significant impact on the environment, with wildlife potentially choking on balloons if eaten or becoming entangled in strings, ribbon or foil that might be attached to them. Releasing balloons is currently a littering offence, however, it is often unclear to people. Banning the outdoor release of lighter-than-air balloons makes it clear what the offence is. It is a targeted, preventative measure to avoid this occurrence.

I would like to acknowledge the great work of the committee and the member for Thuringowa, the chair, and thank the committee secretariat. I would like to welcome and acknowledge the new minister, Minister Linard, and the previous minister. All members on this side of the House care very much about our environment and providing a safe and wonderful place for our children's children and our children's grandchildren. I commend the bill to the House.