




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 23 May 2023

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

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (6.36 pm): The protection of our environment and action on climate change are things that every MP should support and are really critical to our future. That is why I rise to support the Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 as part of the Palaszczuk government's very strong record in terms of: acting on climate change; our renewable energy target, which has driven billions in investment; our protection of the Great Barrier Reef; our strong tree-clearing laws; and, of course, our very strong commitments to public transport. They are all part of our commitment to the environment and our commitment to acting on climate change.

Across the world and right here in Queensland, people are becoming more conscious of the need to reduce waste and also of recycling. We know Queensland is home to some of the most important natural landmarks and features in the world. People travel here from far and wide to appreciate what we have, with five of the 16 World Heritage areas on the globe found right here in Queensland. Whether it is the Daintree, the Great Barrier Reef, Fraser Island, local parks, catchments or forests in my own electorate like Toohey Forest, Queenslanders are acutely aware of minimising their footprint on the environment.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to reducing waste and creating a circular economy. We already have a very strong record of achievement in this regard. We need to save scarce resources and to protect our environment. In my electorate of Miller, I have been on the ground with local volunteers, constituents, who do wonderful work regenerating local catchments and waterways and are a part of the Containers for Change recycling that is so successful at Rocklea.

The bill before us makes a series of changes that are effective and will benefit the local environment, parks and waterways in Brisbane and across our state. There are some good reforms in terms of definitions. The definition of 'waste' which currently resides under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 will be moved to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011. The amendment provided by this bill—this is a very important point—ensures certain things can be prescribed in the regulation to not be waste. This is really important because, by doing so, it is a promotion of the circular economy and more resource recovery opportunities and it ensures they occur more often—and that is what we want.

I am especially conscious of this, as I have worked with my own Department of Transport and Main Roads to support the implementation of TMR's Waste Management Resource Strategy with the aim of working towards our contribution to the circular economy. There is obviously a lot of construction activity in transport and main roads, with seven out of eight record budgets under this government. We have seen the positive impacts of this pioneering policy with glass, crumb rubber and other waste re-used on our road network. On the southern Gold Coast M1 upgrade the contractors won national sustainability awards by re-using clean earth on the same site—not having to remove it from the site and dumping it—and incorporating it in the upgrades. That is fantastic work. Crumb rubber makes the

pavement more malleable, more flexible and gives it longer life, particularly in North Queensland where we have extreme weather events and pressures every year. You would know that, Mr Deputy Speaker, as the member for Mundingburra. These are important things in terms of what we are already doing.

The amendment before us would amend the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act to also allow for the better collection of information and details on how clean earth waste is used. Under the bill, the proposed amendments would allow operators to apply for an operational purposes exemption for clean earth use at the waste disposal site. At the moment, the automatic exemption code for clean earth waste does not provide information on the use or disposal of the clean earth delivered to the waste disposal site. This amendment would allow for the collection of better information about the beneficial use of clean earth at landfill facilities. This move also aligns Queensland with other jurisdictions and improves the consistency of levy frameworks.

In terms of circular economy principles, the Palaszczuk government's Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy is also a formidable step that outlines a strategic priority transition to a circular economy future here in Queensland. This bill will amend the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act to include a reference to that strategy. The inclusion of the circular economy principle in the act would ensure that circular economy considerations form part of the decision-making process. As time moves on, these changes will have a lasting impact by reducing our mark on the natural beauty that makes our state and the local neighbourhoods we all love so much.

The Palaszczuk government has a very strong record on the environment. This is another move forward in terms of reform. We need a much more circular economy to reduce waste, and these provisions will promote that and assist in moving that to the next level.