



Speech By
Shane King

MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

Record of Proceedings, 29 March 2023

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (2.05 pm): Today I rise to contribute to the debate on the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. At the outset I want to say that I am really proud of our government's environmental credentials. Since our election in 2015, we have banned the old-style thin plastic supermarket shopping bags, classified the release of plastic balloons as litter under the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 and introduced the Containers for Change program, which recently hit a huge milestone with over six billion containers recycled. For a couple of years my office has been handing out orange recycling bags and, judging by their popularity, I would say that residents in the Kurwongbah electorate have contributed significantly to that milestone. They are keen to recycle a lot more if the scheme is expanded, as we hear, to include bigger containers such as wine and spirit bottles. They are always on about that.

We have also introduced a five-year road map to ban more single-use plastic items with the following products to be banned from 1 September: cotton buds with plastic stems; expanded polystyrene loose packaging such as those little balls that go in your beanbags—I think everyone gets PTSD from filling a beanbag because they end up everywhere and I certainly do; and plastic microbeads in rinse-off personal care and cleaning products. In researching for this speech I learned that some products that I do not use, such as foundation and blush, contain plastic microbeads.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr KING: Luckily I do not take personal offence because I was not listening to him. Microbeads are also in sunscreen, which I do use; having no hair, I have to.

In further protecting our environment, we have started work on more sustainable products for coffee cups and lids. One of the things that people often tell me they want to see a lot less of is plastic drinking cups. If you have been to a Stadiums Queensland facility lately you might have had a beer or soft drink from a polypropylene plastic or aluminium cup, which is possibly a sustainable alternative for the future.

I am pleased to support the bill before the House today as it continues to deliver on our commitment to protecting the environment and our great lifestyle in Queensland. To do that, the bill amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993. While I will not have time to talk about all of the amendments in the bill, I will mention a few under each of those acts.

In amending the Environmental Protection Act we are improving efficiencies through setting time frames for public interest evaluation reports, introducing a process for changing an application for an estimated rehabilitation cost or ERA decision rather than starting all over again, and making it possible to extend the information request periods for EOA decision-making. When we are talking about environmental rehabilitation, we want to get those decisions right—right down to the dollar.

With regards to environmental impact statements, we are allowing the chief executive to refuse one if it is unlikely the project could proceed under the Environmental Protection Act or any other law, which saves people from wasting their time and money. We are also legislating the lapse of an EIS assessment report after three years to make sure that they continue to reference up-to-date laws, policies and standards. To increase transparency and accountability we are also bringing in the requirement for public notices for all major amendments to environmental authorities for resource activities. This bill inserts a power in the EPA to enable authorised persons to compel a corporation to nominate an executive officer or employee to answer questions on behalf of the corporation.

Sadly, we know that some big corporations have a whole bag of tricks they use to avoid environmental responsibility. This change puts an end to one of them, ensuring someone will take responsibility when there is a case to answer. We are bringing in more liability for offences, specifically acts or omissions that result in environment offences, in a company's chain of command. We are empowering courts to order repeat offenders to stop carrying out activities when it is clear they have no regard for the environmental laws around those activities. There will be penalties, including up to two years in prison, for breaching these court orders.

Finally on the EPA, we are amending a section that deals with noise, bringing noise from boats, jetties and pontoons into line with default noise standards. We know that some jobs are carried out by boat. These workers start early and finish late—just like all of us—and that is why noise that can be heard by someone needs to go on for longer than five minutes in order to be a valid complaint. I deal with a fair bit of that in my area with a racetrack in relation to which noise complaints are a bit spurious.