



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2019

**WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING (WASTE LEVY) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (6.46 pm): On 6 September 2018 the Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef introduced the Waste Reduction and Recycling (Waste Levy) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, with a reporting date of 22 October last year. I want to commend the shadow environment minister, the honourable member for Broadwater, for his contribution which was well reasoned and made clear the LNP's stance on this bill. The explanatory notes state—

The primary purpose of the Bill is to introduce a waste levy that will:

- act as a price signal that encourages waste avoidance and resource recovery behaviours, and discourages disposal to landfill as the first option
- provide a source of funding for programs to assist local government, business and industry to establish better resource recovery practices, improve overall waste management performance and sustain Queensland's natural environment
- provide certainty and security of feedstocks for advanced resource recovery and recycling technologies and processing, and
- facilitate industry investment in resource recovery infrastructure.

These goals sound remarkably similar to the 2011 Waste Reduction and Recycling Bill where witnesses at public hearings from various affected industries said that the bill would not achieve the stated objective and instead would send businesses to the wall. We on this side of the House know how much Labor hates small business. It did not tell Queensland small businesses before the election that it had a sneaky fat tax to lump on them, did it? It wants to bleed them dry. In my 2011 speech on the abovementioned bill, I said—

This government estimated that the additional cost to a regular business would be \$101 a year and between \$118 and \$227 for businesses generating regulated hazardous waste. However, after consultation with members, CCIQ believes that these costs are grossly underestimated.

I continued my speech of 2011 by saying—

To put it in some perspective, CCIQ estimates that the waste levy will cost the average restaurant an additional \$3,120 a year just for their waste collection. How can the average struggling small business be expected to survive this new 'Scrooge' tax?

How can the Premier be believed when in 2018—seven years later—she said, 'Queensland families will not face the cost of this levy.' Who does she think run our small businesses? Robots? It is yet another example of how little Labor understands, let alone wants to support Queensland's 400,000-plus small to medium sized businesses, and now thousands of them in regions are suffering hardship like never before after fires and floods.

Minister Enoch and her Labor comrades were all over the shop trying to explain the need for this levy. First it was outrage over interstate dumping in Ipswich. Mind you, I have it on very good authority that Ipswich needed clean fill for the high amount of construction that was going on. It was not all contaminated waste coming from over the border, but let us not talk about that. Then there were Labor ministers like Steven Miles who stated pre-election, 'Our commitment stands that we won't be

introducing any new taxes, fees or charges.’ He is no longer the minister for the environment, so apparently his word does not count. Mind you, I doubt it ever did. The *Courier-Mail* labelled his comment as worthy of the porky of the year award. This minister’s word has never been sincere. He is the guy who ran to a safer seat when redistributions were imminent. We in the Currumbin electorate call those types cowards.

This bill almost earned the nickname the ‘flip-flop’ bill as one Labor minister after another failed to articulate clearly to the people of Queensland how this tax will affect them. As they bumbled their way through unbelievable explanations, some ministers told blatant untruths and others showed how incompetent they are. Almost 12 months ago the minister for planning in Queensland, the honourable member for Woodridge, told parliament that he could not act on the situation at the Ipswich dumps, but just a couple of weeks later he advised that he had issued a notice to Ipswich City Council to suspend part of its planning scheme. If he were serious about stopping waste coming from interstate, he would close the dumps and the trucks could not bring their waste. If he did that, where would all the construction material and clean fill required for all the projects approved by the Labor-dominated Ipswich council under the leadership of then mayor Paul Pisasale have come from?

Despite all of the flip-flopping, perhaps the ‘deceit’ bill is the more appropriate name for this bill. Let us call it out for what it is: just another Labor tax grab—a greedy, grubby tax grab. Labor is hopeless at managing the economy or creating real jobs. Look at our state debt. It is over \$80 billion and climbing. Those opposite resort to lying to everyday Queenslanders in order to get elected. Time and again they coat the truth with false facts. Remember Anna Bligh and her no asset sale promise, which in reality was a fire sale of Queensland’s assets, flogged off at bargain basement prices. There are some in this House who were ministers then and who flogged off our assets.

In 2011, the waste levy was \$35 a tonne. In 2018, it was up to \$70 per tonne and it goes up \$5 per year. Here we are in 2019 and it has already gone to \$75. Industry sources say that this new tax will add \$3,650 to the cost of a new four-bedroom home. Mind you, that does not seem too bad when we consider the whopping extra cost of units and apartments if the unions are involved in the project. Media reports have suggested that the cost jumps around \$30,000 or \$40,000 per unit.

Earlier today, I listened to the environment minister’s waffle, pathetically disguising this tax as a levy that will pave the way for a better future. An amount of \$1.3 billion is expected to be raised in the tax grab, but only \$100 million or so is going into environmental initiatives. That is just 10 cents in the dollar that will directly benefit our environment. The word ‘hypocrite’ comes to mind—described as the contrivance of a false appearance of virtue—

Ms ENOCH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence to the member’s contribution and I ask that she withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Currumbin, the minister has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

Mrs STUCKEY: Could I ask the minister what I said that was personal?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not to be debated. The minister has taken personal offence. I ask that you withdraw.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. The contrivance of a false appearance of virtue or goodness while concealing real character or inclinations is what we have here. The *Recycling and waste in Queensland 2018* report, which was released last week, revealed that, under this Labor government, interstate waste has increased by 37 per cent in the past year. What frauds the members opposite are to say that they care about the environment? What phoney they are revealed to be when the facts are presented such as this. I note one of the bill’s objectives is to improve—

Government members interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: Goodness me, this muttering from up the back! Honestly! I note that one of the objectives of the bill is to improve overall waste management performance. Just like Labor’s waste levy, the container refund scheme also has the potential to hit ratepayers in the hip pocket. Not only do residents pay more for items in recyclable containers, they may also face council rate hikes as councils need to rebalance their budgets if yellow bins are not returning as much recyclable material from which councils get a revenue stream. I listened to the minister’s attempted explanation for this. However, that is not how people believe the situation will be.

The new container refund scheme, which has been very successful in my home state of South Australia for decades, got off to a dismal start in my electorate with no fixed deposit sites. The implementation date of the scheme was postponed from 1 July 2018 to 1 November 2018, so it should have worked efficiently. But it did not. There were still a lot of details about its implementation to be worked out, but Labor forged ahead regardless.

I would like to commend Narelle Anderson, the CEO of Envirobank, for her genuine efforts to try to find suitable sites in the Currumbin electorate so that the residents of my electorate do not have to travel many kilometres to trade their empty containers. We are working together to find solutions. However, if we are to be successful, we need support from everyone in the community.

One of the major issues at my electorate's smart pod and elsewhere is people taking the bags as soon as they are delivered to the pod. I am told that some individuals are waiting at the container sites for the bags to be delivered so that they can grab the lot. I urge those people to please show some consideration and take no more than three at a time.

Once again, we have a Labor scheme that has not been thought through properly. There are not that many industrial sites for large facilities on the Gold Coast and people will not drive for half an hour for \$5. Then there are pensioners: \$5 means a lot to them. They deserve local facilities for their refunds.

I will turn to the bill. On 5 October 2018, the *Courier-Mail* editorial summed up this legislation by saying—

If you want a master class in how politicians lose the public's trust so easily, have a look at the way the Labor administration of Annastacia Palaszczuk has handled the multi-million dollar waste levy it is imposing despite hand-on-heart promises never to do such a thing.

Now, this incompetent, untruthful government is postponing this job-destroying waste tax from 4 March to 1 July, but the charges will still increase as we speak. The LNP will be opposing this bill.