



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2017

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (WASTE REFORM) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (21:26): I rise to speak to the Environment Waste (Protection Reforms) Amendment Bill 2017. Waste management has come a significant way forward just in my lifetime. In a small country town like Coomandook I can show people—and they may see it when they drive through to Melbourne—that there is a small patch in the scrub line right next to the highway that used to be a local rubble road before the road was directed from Tailem Bend through Cooke Plains to Coomandook. Anyway, there is a patch right next to the highway that was the Coomandook dump. I can tell exactly where it was because there is nothing growing there but weeds.

Way back in the day growing up, that is where you drove. It was a local council road back then because the highway turned at Coomandook on the infamous Coomandook corner, which claimed more than a few trucks. It went out to Moorlands and then you did a sharp left to Tailem Bend, getting on the Mallee Highway. That was used for many years. Down the track there is a new dump site, which was called the Yumali dump site, not far from my property, off the Sherlock Road in Yumali. It just had pits, and you would put all your refuse in there, and when it got full the council would just light it up. Those pits would last for decades sometimes, depending on how many people were delivering rubbish.

Obviously, things break down over time but things may not be combustible in the first instance when you light everything up. It did dry out and became combustible later on. Things have moved on a long way from there. Currently, in the local area we have a lot of these dump sites that have turned into waste transfer stations where you will have a squat of SULO bins where rubbish will go into some and larger rubbish will be designated to an area, and in some places some of this has disappeared over time. I can remember at Coonalpyn there was a site where the bigger loads of rubbish would be buried as landfill, and that still happens in places around the state. Certainly, there are issues like lead acid batteries that have been kept; you can take them for recycling. You can take used oil for recycling purposes, and things have really moved on.

In recent years, I note that the Coorong District Council has put on a service—mind you, you pay for it—a triple bin service where you have a rubbish bin, a recycling bin and a green bin. Being on the land, I have never put out the green bin. I think it costs something like \$325 a year. It is a service that I think is contracted out now to a waste recovery firm. They have a truck exactly the

same as you see going around the City of Adelaide that drives past the back of the property and picks up your rubbish. Yes, you pay for it one way or the other. Some councils do it through rates, but this is a fee-for-service opportunity.

I note that the Coorong District Council is about to go out to a consultation phase to see if they can deliver bins everywhere in the community. By that, I mean every property owner over at least 1,600 kilometres of rubble local roads. They are suffering a bit through lack of maintenance in many places. I wonder how sustainable that will be if it goes ahead, but that is for the council to deal with. I know some people are not happy about it.

There is something about waste that we all have to be aware of: if you make it too easy it can be a problem and if you make it too hard then waste can be a problem. Several years ago, the Rural City of Murray Bridge put in big skips, huge rubbish bins that need a truck to pick them up, which you see on building sites and through the city and in country areas. They had designated sites because they thought it would be good to get waste collected. Guess what happened? I guess people overused or abused the system. The skips soon filled up, rubbish was dumped around them and it became too hard to manage. They basically became stockpile sites, and the only way to regulate them was to pull them out and work out another way of dealing with the issue.

The licensing of dump sites has probably become dearer now, but I think the Hartley dump in the Rural City of Murray Bridge is where it has its waste repository area now. Even though they are quite heavily clay and rubble-lined pits when you dig them, under the rules and regulations they have to spend about \$100,000 per pit to line them again. That comes at a cost to the ratepayer. Some people deem that it is over the top, but it is under the regulation so it has to be done.

A few years ago, when I was on holiday one summer down near Geelong, I was talking to some people from Sunshine in Victoria who were holidaying there as well. They said, 'When you throw a mattress out in Sunshine, you just take it down the street somewhere and throw it out.' Their thinking was, 'As long as you don't get caught,' because the issue was that for every mattress that they wanted to dump legally there was a \$100 fee, which was an instant disincentive for those people to do the right thing. I am not saying that is what they should do, but it was an interesting observation that that is what they did because it was too expensive.

I understand that we have come a long way and that recycling is a fantastic thing, whether you are recycling soft drink cans, milk cartons, orange juice cartons, wine bottles or whatever. It is a great thing, and we have that access down at the Coorong and I have access at my Adelaide house when parliament is sitting. There are people who want the 10¢ from our deposit scheme, and plenty of operators will take cans and bottles if you collect them and deliver them. Coming from the farming sector, many people, as I do, have wool packs in sheds that they fill up with cans and bottles, or you might use a 44-gallon drum to put beer or wine bottles in. You tie them onto your trailer or ute and take them up and get the appropriate money, and it is quite handy. You might only have to do it every couple of years, but it is quite handy and it is doing the right thing.

I note that in this bill they are managing stockpiling and also that there are some issues around the financial assurance. There are concerns about whether or not this will put small waste operators out of business in regional areas. Waste has become an industry over time. I remember, when I went overseas, looking at the storage of nuclear waste, and we took a senior person from Veolia with us —fascinating conversation about how you manage all sorts of waste. He was certainly on the trip to see if there was going to be a part to play for their company in regard to the storing of nuclear waste. So people are looking at all angles. We know that asbestos has to be managed appropriately. As I said before, so many items can be recycled, which is a great thing, because it does seem pointless to just keep digging holes and putting it in.

Certainly, then, on this side of the house we are supportive of the bill. I note that it gives significant extra powers to inspectors and authorised officers, but as I said the one overriding issue I have with anything to do with waste management is that if you make it too hard, too expensive, people will find a way out. It would not matter what penalty you put on it; they will take the risk. That is just human nature. It is not right—I am not saying it is right—but it is human nature. You have to find an equitable outcome so that you can convince people that they must do the right thing, not just for the benefit of their community but for their state and for the country and essentially for the world into the future. With those few remarks I commend the bill, and I will be interested in the debate as we progress.