

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [1.17 pm]: I am pleased to advise that Western Australia continues to lead the nation in phasing out problematic single-use plastics. From 27 February, a further nine single-use items are being phased out under *Western Australia's plan for plastics: Stage 2*. Plastic waste can harm wildlife, is frequently littered and can contaminate recycling. It is also increasingly entering the human food chain as microplastics, posing a risk to public health. The McGowan government is committed to tackling the harm caused by plastic waste through its Plan for Plastics. Previous action has already prevented many millions of plastic bags, cups, plates, cutlery, straws and containers from being littered or becoming landfill.

Stage 2 of the plan includes plastic produce bags, cotton buds with plastic stems, expanded polystyrene packaging, microbeads, degradable plastics, lids for takeaway containers, bowls, trays, plates, cups, expanded polystyrene cups, unlidded trays and coffee cups and lids. Western Australians consume more than 700 million of these items each year, equivalent to more than 10 billion over 20 years. To support businesses to transition to more sustainable alternatives and to allow for the use of existing stock, phase-in periods of six to 28 months for different items are in place before the regulations will be enforced.

Consultation on stage 2 of the Plan for Plastics was undertaken through community sessions; a survey to gather community, government and industry feedback; and a consultation regulatory impact statement. The single-use plastic working group with representatives from industry, community, disability, waste and government sectors has provided feedback on both stages of the Plan for Plastics and guided the development of the regulations. Consultation feedback found high levels of community and business support for stage 2 of the Plan for Plastics.

I want to thank and acknowledge the input from all stakeholders whose contributions were invaluable in preparing these important regulations and I thank them for helping ensure that our measures are practical, well considered and nation leading.