

PLASTIC BAGS — CITY OF FREMANTLE BAN

77. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I notice that Fremantle City Council is set to become the first council in Australia to ban plastic bags.

- (1) Does the minister believe his current policies are doing enough when plastic bags continue to pollute our beaches and parks, damage boats and engines and kill thousands of birds and sea creatures every year?
- (2) Will the government now follow the lead of the Fremantle City Council and support Labor's bill to ban plastic bags statewide?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The Western Australian government has examined the legislation introduced to ban lightweight plastic shopping bags in South Australia. The legislation is currently being reviewed by the South Australian government and it would be premature to introduce similar legislation in WA before the results of the review are available. In the meantime, the government continues to encourage voluntary take-up of biodegradable and reusable bags by customers and retailers as part of broader efforts to decrease litter, improve recycling and reduce waste in this state.
- (2) The government has previously expressed its concerns about the approach outlined in the bill. The bill only bans plastic bags of less than 35 microns in thickness, and anecdotal evidence in South Australia indicates some retailers are moving to thicker plastic bags negating the initiative. This evidence reinforces the need to wait for an outcome of the South Australian review. Plastic bag litter represents only one to two per cent of the total litter stream and targeted legislation for plastic bags may not be the most efficient way to target litter and waste issues.