

WASTE AVOIDANCE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY AMENDMENT (VALIDATION) BILL 2014

Third Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [8.02 pm]: It falls to me to conclude our discussion from this side of the house on the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment (Validation) Bill 2014 and say that yes, we will be supporting the legislation. We have expressed our concerns, though, about the misuse of the landfill levy, especially if that money is applied simply to consolidated revenue. Our concern is also that the recent increases in the levy are not calibrated towards delivering an increase in the recycling rate and the diversion from landfill rate. We do note that Western Australia falls well behind other states on recycling and on diversion from landfill. We are naturally, therefore, supportive of measures that can go some way towards improving that situation. In the debate, we highlighted that this legislation is before us because of a particular legal situation in the Supreme Court of Western Australia, and we discussed how the situation needs to be remedied by this retrospective legislation. There is a degree of retrospectivity about it, and it will ensure that decisions made by the Waste Authority in the past are consistent with what the objectives of the legislation were all about.

Our support is there. We do hope, though, that the government will have heard some of our concerns about the lack of support for innovation and for driving change in how we view waste: this idea that we can actually get towards a society in which we avoid the creation of waste. As the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act suggests, waste avoidance and resource recovery is what we should be driving towards. I read the quote from the Jeremy Irons documentary that waste is simply a valuable resource but in the wrong place. That is about how we need to redesign our system so that we do not have that mingling of things that leads to them being deemed waste when in fact they do have an economic value and we would, as a society, be much richer for making sure that we can, wherever possible, recover and re-use things. However, it is all about making sure that our systems are in place and the products are designed so that recovery is as easy as possible.

I will conclude my remarks there and say again that yes, we will be supporting this legislation.

MR A.P. JACOB (Ocean Reef — Minister for Environment) [8.06 pm] — in reply: I thank the opposition for its support for this Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment (Validation) Bill 2014. It is worth nothing that although a range of comments during the consideration in detail stage mainly focused on ensuring that this bill does what we set out to do, which is validate the legislation, it was right and proper that that measure was queried, and clearly there is a level of confidence about that. It is very important that we as a Parliament make clear that we support the landfill levy as a price and as a market mechanism to drive waste avoidance and recycling activity. I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.