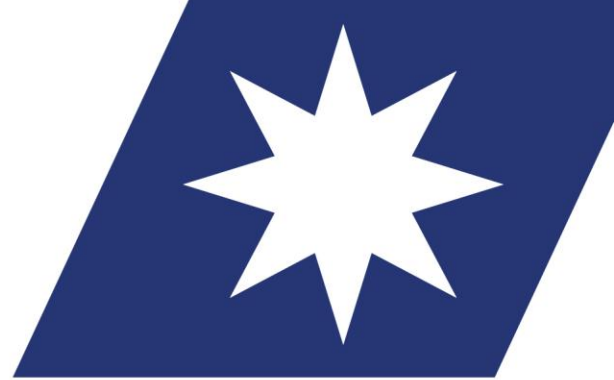


NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

31/7/19

Plastic phase out needs Ministerial attention

A YOUNG Hinchinbrook student with a dream to end single-use plastic in Australia hopes to take her message straight to Queensland Parliament when it visits Townsville in September.

Straw No More Townsville “StrawBassador” Emily Walker has enlisted the support of Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto to request a meeting with State Environment Minister Leeanne Enoch so she can lobby for a reduction in single-use plastic.

“There is so much research available that tells us that single-use plastics are very costly to produce in terms of the fossil fuels needed to make them in the first place as well as the cost on our environment,” Emily said.

“My generation should not have to pay for the ignorance of the current generation.”

Mr Dametto said he jumped at the chance to support Emily’s request to speak to the parliament when she first approached his office earlier this month.

“Single-use plastic is a scourge on our environment, especially our oceans, and I wholeheartedly support Emily’s tireless efforts to reduce its impact,” he said.

“Katter’s Australian Party already strongly supports a ban on plastic straws and there’s no reason why other single-use plastic can’t be replaced with something more bio-degradable and environmentally friendly.”

Emily said she was inspired to take action on single-use plastics after watching the ABC series “War on Waste” before becoming a StrawBassador with the Straw No More campaign that was founded by Cairns youngster Molly Steer.

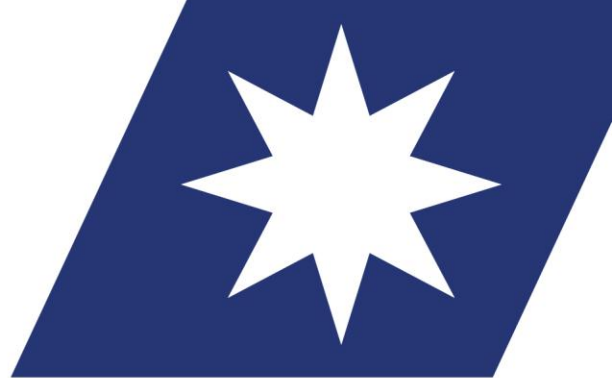
“Some people are very attached to single use plastics and the convenience of them. Most support the sustainable lifestyle and the idea of reducing waste, especially young people who report climate change to be one of their top concerns for the future,” Emily said of the community’s feedback.

“I recently conducted a survey from a stall I ran at the Willows Rotary Market and 93 per cent of the people I asked said they would support Queensland banning single use plastics. This result fired me up to try and get a meeting with our Premier and Leeanne Enoch.”

Emily said while she understood that some members of the community relied on plastic straws because of their disabilities, the wider community should be encouraged to make the transition away from single-use plastic.

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“It’s really scary the amount of landfill and waste that is created by single-use plastics when there are so many wonderful alternatives available. The State and Federal Government needs to support local councils to invest in sustainable development and build more commercial composting facilities,” she said.

“It’s also scary that so many people are just not aware of how damaging single-use plastics are. Education is the key and I am very excited by organisations such as Replas, who are pioneering plastics recycling. We also need to make sure that bio-products are better labelled so that people understand the difference between those alternatives that can be composted at home versus those that can only be composted under commercial conditions.”

Emily said she would love “to persuade Australia’s Federal Government to ban all single-use plastics such as straws, takeaway containers and plastic bags to protect and ensure a sustainable future for everyone”.

The 11-year-old has already lobbied many local businesses and schools, met with Townsville Mayor Jenny Hill and is currently in negotiations with Stadiums Queensland, Spotless and the Cowboys regarding the new stadium being a single-use plastic free venue.

Meanwhile, Townsville City Council has pledged for all their events and venues to be single-use plastic free.

Mr Dametto praised Emily’s passion and enthusiasm for a more environmentally friendly future.

“Compassionate children like Emily are exactly the kind of future leaders Hinchinbrook needs and I am proud to support the Straw No More campaign,” he said.

For more information, search “Straw No More Townsville” on Facebook and follow the links.

—ENDS—

Photo caption

Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto with “StrawBassador” and face of the Straw No More Townsville campaign Emily Walker with some reusable metal straws.

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