

## Legislative Council

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### PLASTIC BAGS

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON** (14:35): I have a supplementary question. Will the minister give us some indication of the government's intention, in the future, to ban plastic water bottles, given that Don Burke has said that the environmental impact of plastic water bottles is about 100 times greater than that of plastic bags?

**The Hon. G.E. GAGO** (Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health) (14:36): As I said, the legislation that this government is looking at goes to banning a particular defined plastic bag. We do not intend to go any further than that. We do not intend to mandate that reusable bags are necessarily put in place, either. Legislation will not deal with that; it will simply deal with what is not able to be used and will leave it to the market to decide what alternatives will be put in place.

Single-use plastic bags are probably iconic of our disposable society and the wastefulness of our society. There are many other alternatives to single-use plastic bags that have a much lower environmental footprint than these plastic bags. I accept that we have become used to having them in our lives and it will mean some inconvenience at the time of change, but people's behaviour will have to adapt. We will forget our cloth bags, as I already do on occasion, and that will be inconvenient. However, I believe that people's behaviour and shopping practices will change, and they will change very quickly when this legislation is in place—and the environment will be better off for it.

There is something like 1,600-odd tonnes of plastic coming from single-use plastic bags which are introduced into our environment here in South Australia. This is simple and easy to avoid by simply replacing this type of plastic bag that does not have a high reuse rating, when you compare it to other heavy-duty products. Many of these other products have, as I said, a much higher recycling rate than these bags. It is a very simple and easy thing for us to get rid of them. We do not need these bags in our environment. As I said, it is a symbol of unnecessary waste and our attitude of simply 'Toss it out and dispose of it.'