

**INQUIRY INTO WASTE AVOIDANCE AND RESOURCE  
RECOVERY AMENDMENT (PLASTICS REDUCTION)  
BILL 2021**

**Organisation:** ParraParents  
**Date Received:** 3 May 2021

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Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC  
Chair, Parliamentary Inquiry  
Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment (Plastics Reduction) Bill 2021

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2021

**Re: Inquiry into the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment (Plastics Reduction) Bill 2021**

Dear Ms Faehrmann MLC,

Thank you for your work in addressing the significant impact single use plastics have on our environment and the untenable reliance we have on them as a community.

I only just came across your plastics reduction bill and with submissions closing today wanted to quickly share my experience of removing close to 550 Clean Up Australia bags of rubbish, easily weighing over two tonnes, from Parramatta River over the last 2 years.

By far the most common littered items we find polluting the foreshore and crucial mangroves is polystyrene and soft plastics (mainly plastic bags and food wrappers). Then there's all the harder pieces of plastic rubbish, like bottles, plastic lids, cotton ear buds (thanks to sewerage overflow and people flushing them down the toilet) and straws.

As a parent, one piece of rubbish that has stood out to me when I started removing rubbish along the foreshore at Ermington was lollipop sticks. I had the idea to create a giant lollipop from littered sticks and use it as a fun and novel way to raise awareness of the accumulative effect of seemingly small bits of litter and advocate for a switch back to a biodegradable stick.

Since June last year, we've easily collected over 2000 littered lollipop sticks, mostly from the foreshore and parks from Rydalmere to Ryde.

At first, I thought maybe I had a bias to notice them. But at the Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Litter Congress recently, Edwina Foulsham (Senior Scientist in the Coastal & Marine Unit, Science Division of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment) presented a summary of her Key Litter Items Index Survey and lollipop sticks was listed as number 8 of the most commonly found items as part of her research along Parramatta River (and the Cooks River from memory).



While it's definitely not the most pressing waste and plastics reduction issue, it is an interesting example of the challenges of focusing purely on behaviour change. When I give my children a lollipop, I remove the wrapper and put it in the bin or my pocket (if a bin isn't nearby). But it's only since finding so many littered lollipop sticks along Parramatta River that I ask my children where there stick is once finished. Most parents and kids very likely forget – and it's very common to find littered lollipop sticks around swings and flying foxes. In this scenario, the best outcome for reducing the impact of lollipop sticks (such a popular confectionary items) on our environment is to have the manufacturers switch (back) to a biodegradable stick. Unfortunately, Chupa Chups are not manufactured in Australia, making getting them to switch even more challenging.

We'll be launching our giant lollipop stick on 5<sup>th</sup> June for World Environment Day and hope to use it to educate students about the impact of litter on our waterways.



Kind regards,

Kellie Darley

Co-founder, ParraParents

Riverkeeper Ambassador, Our Living River

Community Representative, Parramatta River Catchment Group

*Helping families discover all the wonderful things to do in and around the City of Parramatta*

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