

# HON. ROBIN CHAPPLE MLC

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The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor  
City of Perth  
Level 11, Council House  
27-29 St Georges Terrace  
PERTH 6000

Via email: [lord.mayor@cityofperth.wa.gov.au](mailto:lord.mayor@cityofperth.wa.gov.au)

Dear Lord Mayor,

## **RE: BAN ON MASS BALLOON RELEASES**

I am writing to you seeking information regarding the Council's position on legislating to ban the release of helium balloons in public spaces. As you are likely aware, the Town of Cottesloe Council have recently passed a ban to this effect and City of Cockburn Council is soon to follow suit.

Cemeteries, schools, parklands and beaches are popular spaces for mass balloon releases to occur. I have received correspondence from many concerned community members regarding the legality of these events.

I have put on notice a motion to introduce the *Environmental Protection Amendment (Banning Plastic Bags and Other Things)* Bill 2017 into the Legislative Council of Western Australia. This would include a ban on balloon events such as these.

It is my understanding that the *Litter Act 1979*, defines items as litter when they are deposited on land or waters. Therefore, under this law, the action of releasing balloons is not an offence. However, when the balloons land, littering subsequently occurs. Under the *Litter Act 1979*, this is a very difficult offence to substantiate and there is currently no other legislation in Western Australia, besides the Town of Cottesloe's proposed ban, that addresses these acts of illegal dumping.

The environmental impacts of released balloons are widespread and can be catastrophic. Not only is helium a finite resource, but a single balloon, even one made from natural latex to the highest industry standards, will take *at least* 5 years to break down. In the years the balloon (or fragments) exist in our ecosystems, land and marine life are put in existential danger. This is the case especially for birds and marine animals. Fish, birds, turtles and other animals are often found dead with balloon remnants littered throughout their bodies. The string attached to the balloon can also be fatal wrapping around limbs, necks, birds' beaks and turtles' shells.

**Member for the Mining & Pastoral Region  
in the Western Australia Legislative Council**

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It is simply astounding to me, given the impacts that balloons and other plastics are having on our marine life are known, that we have not immediately curtailed such reckless environmental vandalism.

Balloons are a wasteful, single-use product that quickly becomes trash. Therefore, I will be writing to all other Western Australian Local Councils, urging Local Government action to ban the mass release of balloons in public spaces.

I look forward to hearing your position on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Chapple'.

The Hon Robin Chapple MLC  
**Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region**  
**20 October 2017**