

**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 1**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

How will the Government's new approach to flying fox roost management deliver better outcomes for local communities and streamline processes?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government's new approach will give councils an as-of-right authority to manage roosts in designated urban areas. This simply means that councils will not need to apply to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection for a permit to manage a roost in these areas.

The designation of urban areas recognises firstly that it is in these areas, where people live, that conflict is most likely and that action may be necessary.

Non-lethal dispersal or modification of flying-fox roosts has proven to be an effective method of relieving wellbeing impacts from flying-foxes. Examples can be found in recent successful dispersals at Warwick and Pittsworth.

Roost management, especially dispersal, is a complex undertaking that requires considerable thought, planning and resources. A number of recent actions by councils and others have shown that it can be done without harm to flying-foxes, without jeopardising their broader biological role, and with a successful outcome for affected community members.

Outside of the designated urban areas, councils may still apply for a permit to manage a roost, which will be assessed by the department.

Other non-council groups may also still apply for a permit, as is currently the case. All permit applications will be assessed under revised, streamlined processes.

These proposals will relieve councils of the red tape burden they have experienced to date in these matters.



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 2**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline the ways in which the Newman Government has taken action to protect our iconic koalas?

ANSWER:

The Newman Government is implementing a suite of new and practical initiatives that will ensure the long-term protection of Queensland's iconic koalas.

The *Investing to protect our koalas* election commitment is providing funding of \$26.5 million, under three specific programs, to acquire koala habitat, support research into koala diseases and other preventable causes of death, injury and illness, and enhance koala rescue and rehabilitation services.

The *Koala Habitat Program* is investing \$22.5 million over three years for the purchase and management of properties that enhance connectivity and/or can be effectively rehabilitated to bushland, in south east Queensland.

The government recognises however, that threats to the wellbeing of koalas are far broader than habitat loss. A total of \$4 million is being provided for disease research which will also enhance koala rescue and rehabilitation services.

From the \$26.5 million, an allocation of \$3.2 million is being invested in research into koala disease mitigation to counter preventable causes of death, injury and illness under the *Koala Research Grant Program*.

The third initiative under the *Investing to protect our koala's* election commitment is the *Koala Rescue and Rehabilitation Grant Program*, which is providing \$0.8 million over four years to front-line organisations that provide an invaluable service to the community through their work with sick, injured and orphaned koalas in Queensland.

Landholders also have the opportunity to partner with the Queensland Government to restore and manage koala habitat on their own land under the *Koala Nature Refuges Program*. This is an ongoing initiative that is funded above and beyond the funding of \$26.5 million allocated to deliver the election commitment. Since its inception, the *Koala Nature Refuges Program* has funded the restoration of over 227 hectares of koala habitat on 35 new or existing nature refuges.



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 3**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline the Government's commitment to the ongoing protection of the Great Barrier Reef?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government manages diverse values of the reef—environmental, recreational and commercial values—based upon expert advice and consensus-based evidence.

It is vital that reef ecosystems have the capacity and resilience to cope with present and future pressures. The Queensland Government remains committed to the updated Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan), a state and federal initiative designed to halt and reverse the decline in reef water quality.

The government is investing \$35 million per annum for reef water quality initiatives. The Reef Plan's third Great Barrier Reef Report Card has recently been released and confirms that "management changes and water quality improvements are on a positive trajectory", and progress towards Reef Plan targets "continues to be encouraging".

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is currently working with the cane growing and cattle grazing industries to develop and implement voluntary best management practice programs (BMP). Working with industry can reduce sediment, fertiliser and herbicide runoff, and ultimately reduce existing administrative and regulatory burdens on producers. This approach demonstrates the government's commitment to achieving positive economic outcomes for Queensland.

Approximately \$5.4 million is being directed to cattle and cane BMP development, with an additional \$4 million going to related reef catchment agriculture extension projects.

In response to actual demand for port infrastructure, the government has significantly changed the previous government's plans for the multi-cargo facility at Abbot Point near Bowen. A more measured development approach has been taken, heralding a much more responsible future for the port's development.

Revised policies to protect coastal ecosystems and manage coastal development have been incorporated into a draft single State Planning Policy being prepared under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*. Requirements on developments to deliver strict water quality outcomes will better protect the reef and coastal biodiversity.

In the finalised terms of reference for the Great Barrier Reef Coastal Zone Strategic Assessment, the Queensland Government has taken a broad view of development near the reef, and considered how effective Queensland's management tools are at protecting matters of national environmental significance. It is anticipated that draft strategic assessment reports will be available later this year.

The department is working closely with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to produce complementary strategic assessments for the coastal zone and the marine area. These also form part of Australia's response to the World Heritage Committee's concerns about the impact of development on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

The draft Great Barrier Reef Ports Strategy has been released and supports the assessments, outlining significant restrictions on reef port development to within existing limits for the next 10 years.

The Newman Government has also renegotiated the 'assessment bilateral' agreement with the Australian Government, allowing for a single environmental impact statement covering both state and commonwealth requirements. This has already proven effective, with the government reducing impacts on the reef by imposing additional conditions on port and coastal developments.

The government has begun buying back commercial fishing licences as part of its \$9 million election commitment to reduce the total net fishing effort along Queensland's east coast. Some 35 licences have been purchased so far.

Further work has been undertaken on Raine Island with the Australian Government and Traditional Owners to reduce the mortality of green turtles, demonstrating that practical, effective, on-ground actions can make a real difference for threatened species.

Together with the Deputy Premier we have announced the government's sponsorship of a Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership, focusing on collaborative harbour monitoring and management. The Queensland Government has committed \$4 million over the next two years to kick-start the Partnership. This is broken up into \$1 million for start-up costs and \$1.5 million for each of the two years to be matched by other Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership members to support running costs. Early this year, reports were released about water quality and fish health in the harbour, summarising 12 months of testing. There is no evidence to link water quality with illness in fish or people and, pleasingly, fish health has significantly improved.

Successful reef catchment-related applications under the 'Everyone's Environment Grants' program will help improve reef health through community Coastcare and waterway clean-ups.

**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 4**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline how the reduction in green tape and the department's new regulatory strategy will foster economic growth and continue to deliver strong environmental outcomes?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to reducing red tape and regulation for business by 20%, while maintaining environmental standards.

To contribute to this target, the Greentape Reduction project is implementing reforms to the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and subordinate legislation with estimated savings to business and government of \$20 million.

Complementing the Greentape reforms is the department's Regulatory Strategy, which further streamlines how approvals are assessed and increases the focus on compliance and enforcement to ensure the delivery of strong environmental outcomes.

Application and assessment processes for businesses requiring environmental licences have been streamlined. This has reduced delays and administration costs and most importantly provided certainty when gaining approvals.

The new arrangements will free up to 12,000 businesses from the requirement to hold an environmental approval bringing regulatory standards in line with those in other states and making Queensland more competitive.

For mining activities, the application process no longer requires an environmental management plan to be submitted, environmental impact statement information is no longer duplicated and the public notification process is not repeated. This will speed up the approval process and make Queensland an attractive place to do business.

Support has also been provided to the tourism sector with the halving of annual fees for small sewage treatment plants significantly easing the financial pressure on caravan parks and B&Bs.

The reforms allow for greater flexibility for operational approvals, for example, removing the need to make further development applications where a business is upgrading facilities on an approved site.

The regulatory strategy supports flexibility and innovation for business by re-focusing how the department approaches environmental licensing. The department will use conditions in approvals to set the environmental outcomes that businesses must achieve, but will not prescribe how the business must achieve the outcome.

Environmental approvals will have fewer conditions, meaning less compliance costs for business. As an example, a major sewage treatment plant in north Queensland recently had its approval reduced from 19 pages to six pages of conditions whilst achieving the same environmental outcome.

The reforms will make sure that environmental standards are maintained by increasing the amount of compliance monitoring carried out and increasing inspections of high-risk sites, to focus attention on the areas where there is the greatest risk of harm to the environment.

For 2012-13, the department undertook 649 proactive compliance inspections, and carried out another 195 follow-up inspections, demonstrating its commitment to monitoring the environmental performance of its customers.

Overall, the Greentape Reduction reforms and regulatory strategy support economic growth in Queensland and maintain environmental standards by reducing costs and delays for business through a streamlined approval system. In tandem, they make Queensland a better place to do business.



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 5**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline the Government's commitment to Healthy Waterways in South East Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Newman Government is continuing to deliver on its election commitment to maintain the Healthy Waterways Program in Southeast Queensland with a commitment of \$8 million over four years to 2017.

The government's contribution to the SEQ Healthy Waterways Program is administered by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. This investment package requires working in partnership with local governments, Healthy Waterways Ltd and SEQ Catchments, the regional natural resource management organisation. Through these partnerships the government's funding can be leveraged with funds from other sources such as the Commonwealth, councils, utilities and private investors.

The funded projects deliver multiple benefits for waterway health and environmental outcomes in priority catchments. The department is currently negotiating project plans with partners to deliver projects that address issues that have been identified through the work of the Healthy Waterways Partnership.

Sediment comes from both rural and urban sources. Projects will be managed by both SEQ Catchments and Healthy Waterways Ltd to address rural issues and work to ensure urban development is sustainable.

Sediment loads are a significant concern for waterways and Moreton Bay, and for critical infrastructure. As a result of the 2013 Australia Day floods, the capacity of Brisbane's primary water treatment plant at Mount Crosby was seriously compromised, threatening Brisbane's water supplies. Sediment from catchments has reduced the capacity of water storage reservoirs, such as Wivenhoe, and has required the Port of Brisbane to expend millions of dollars on additional dredging work to keep shipping channels navigable.

The Healthy Waterways Network has identified 'Connect to your Creek' as a priority activity to build a relationship between communities and their waterways. Local governments have taken a lead in developing whole-of-catchment river recovery plans which are important initiatives to strengthen the community-waterway connection.

Government funding and science support will also provide a substantial contribution to the annual Ecosystem Health Monitoring program. This program is a long-term core project of the SEQ Healthy Waterways Network. Government funding and science also supports the production of the Healthy Waterways Ecosystem Health report card.

**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 6**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline the performance of the department's approval and assessment process?

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is committed to strong environmental management supporting sustainable economic development.

The department has been implementing a number of projects that will streamline application and assessment processes under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act).

The department strives to continuously improve its performance. This is evident when comparing performance for last financial year with this financial year.

Average assessment times have decreased by 5.4 weeks for petroleum and gas activities, and 0.6 weeks for prescribed environmentally relevant activities.

The department is committed to further reductions in assessment times and reducing business establishment and operational costs for industry in Queensland.

Greentape Reduction reforms have reduced the number of prescribed environmentally relevant activities that will trigger the development approval process under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* from 196 to 150. This removes the less complex environmentally relevant activities from the Integrated Development Assessment System process.

Eligibility criteria and standard conditions are being developed for 19 prescribed environmentally relevant activity thresholds. This will allow standard applications to be made for these activities, with the application decided within four weeks instead of the current average assessment time of 7.2 weeks.

Applicants are expected to be able to make standard applications for most of these activities by October 2013, once standard conditions and eligibility criteria have been through public consultation and notified in the Government Gazette.

Where a standard application is approved, the environmental authority will normally only include the standard conditions. Where the operator cannot comply with some standard conditions, a variation application can be made. The assessment will only relate to the conditions being varied, further streamlining the assessment process for the applicant.

Once gazetted, the eligibility criteria and standard conditions for standard applications will be available on the government's website. This will allow new operators to understand what the environmental management requirements are, before they lodge an application.

In addition the auditor functions added to the EP Act should reduce assessment timeframes for applications relating to contaminated land.

The government has developed an interim framework for considering applications for contaminated land auditors. This framework was developed with submissions received from environmental consultants.

This framework will allow contaminated land auditors to provide independent third party certification for matters such as evaluating site investigation reports, validation reports, draft site management plans and draft amendments of site management plans against prescribed criteria.

Independent third party certification is used to provide assurance that regulated activities are completed in accordance with regulatory requirements. Processing times for assessment by the department will at least be halved where independent third party certification is used.

**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 7**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

What progress has been made with the Gladstone Healthy Harbour partnership?

ANSWER:

The Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership is progressing towards an annual report card that will measure and communicate the health of the aquatic ecosystem of Gladstone Harbour. The Newman Government has committed \$4 million over the next two years to kick-start the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership. This is broken up into \$1 million for start-up costs and \$1.5 million for each of the two years to be matched by other Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership members to support running costs.

The Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership has appointed independent experts in diverse fields of experience to advise the Partnership on the best science available for a Healthy Harbour report card.

The Independent Science Panel is currently overseeing several projects. These include:

- a mapping and synthesis of existing monitoring and research in the Gladstone Harbour to assist with the identification of monitoring and research duplication and gaps;
- a review of other environmental report cards to ensure the Partnership implements the best available scientific method for the Healthy Harbour Report Card;
- a conceptual model of the Gladstone Harbour to help determine the indicators to be measured for the Healthy Harbour Report Card and to communicate the factors at work that drive change in Gladstone Harbour's water quality; and
- a social perceptions survey to fully understand the Gladstone community's beliefs and understanding about the Gladstone Harbour.

In addition to the Independent Science Panel activities, the Partnership has also formalised an arrangement with the Gladstone Region Environmental Advisory Network for the Network to be the Partnership's primary community reference body.

The Gladstone Region Environmental Advisory Network is represented on the Partnership and has assisted to develop a vision for a Healthy Harbour. The Partnership vision for a Healthy Harbour will be finalised at its next meeting on 31 July 2013. The Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership Independent Science Panel will be using the Partnership's vision of a Healthy Harbour to also determine what needs to be measured for the Healthy Harbour report card.

Lastly, the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership participants have been furthering the formal establishment of the Partnership. At the next meeting on 31 July 2013 details of potential governance structure options and budget requirements will be discussed.

The funding commitments from other Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership members will then be negotiated. It is the government's expectation that the other partners will match the \$1.5 million per annum it has committed.

The Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership is progressing towards better environmental management for the people and industry of Gladstone Harbour.

**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 8**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline this Government's commitment to crocodile management in North Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Newman Government is committed to improving crocodile management to enhance community safety. To this end, the government has dedicated \$1.46 million in 2013-14 in addition to the \$1.5 million previously committed over four years from 2012-13. This will fund crocodile management consistent with the Northern Territory's successful three-tiered approach that strikes a balance between community safety and crocodile conservation.

The crocodile management policy implementation has been initiated through the development of pilot *Crocodile Management Plans* for the Cairns, Townsville, Hinchinbrook and Cassowary Coast local government areas. These councils have been chosen on the basis that they experience a higher rate of crocodile-human interactions than all other areas of crocodile habitat in Queensland. Critical local knowledge provided by the four local government authorities has been used in developing the action plans.

Additionally, grants have been provided to each of these councils to assist in implementation of the *Crocodile Management Plans* and improve crocodile management within those local government areas. Surf Life Saving Queensland has also been granted \$40,000 for the purchase of two new rescue boats to aid in crocodile sighting response.

Crocodile management is also being guided by a revised advisory structure for crocodile management in Queensland, with the recent establishment of the North Queensland Community Advisory Group on Crocodile Management to provide critical local knowledge in regard to crocodile management issues in North Queensland. This Committee met for its initial meeting on 27 June 2013 in Cairns.

Wildlife officers remain vigilant in responding to circumstances where crocodiles are behaving aggressively or presenting a threat to public safety. In the 2012-13 financial years, 13 crocodiles were removed across the state as they were presenting a threat to public safety. These crocodiles were placed in captivity in zoos or crocodile farms.





**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 9**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline the progress that is being made to the Government's acquisition program for National Parks?

ANSWER:

The Newman Government is making significant progress towards the acquisition of National Parks that are relevant to the needs of Queensland in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In February this year, the Premier announced that the Queensland Government would work with Queenslanders to develop a long-term vision for the state. This will be realised through the *Queensland Plan* – a shared vision for the next 30 years that identifies local and state wide priorities.

One of the six key consultation questions posed by the Queensland Plan is how we can strengthen the economic future for Queensland and achieve sustainable landscapes. Improving the resilience of our landscape is imperative for society. Resilience and sustainability are very important considerations in all government decisions, including National Park and other protected area acquisitions.

Acquiring lands of high biodiversity value can provide opportunities for visitors and tourism. These lands also make a real contribution to the future resilience of the Queensland landscape through increasing the connectivity of our protected areas and safeguarding refugia for biodiversity.

We are making substantial progress towards negotiating the purchase of four very significant properties that meet all of the above criteria. It is anticipated that these properties will form the first tranche of major acquisitions in this term of government. Further details are expected to be released later this year.



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 10**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

The Newman Government repealed the Waste Levy in 2012, what policy and program alternatives is the Government pursuing in its place?

ANSWER:

The Newman Government is committed to the development of an industry-led waste strategy to provide a new strategic direction and focus for waste management in Queensland. The new waste strategy will identify innovative solutions to some of the issues in waste management and resource recovery today. The Queensland Government is working with waste generators, local government, environment and community organisations and the waste sector to develop the strategy.

The strategy aims to drive sustainable outcomes without the costs that were attached to a waste levy. The strategy is being developed based on the issues that are identified by key interested parties making up the entire waste management chain.

A steering committee of representatives from key stakeholder groups was formed in early 2013. The steering committee has identified three central themes for the strategy, based around enhancing economic growth and job creation; providing for Queensland businesses to manage their wastes more efficiently to increase productivity and reduce waste generation; and reducing Queensland's impact on the local and global environment through waste avoidance and better waste management practices.

As well as the development of a new Strategy, there are other tools such as disposal bans and product stewardship approaches available through the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011* to help drive innovation and improved practices.

The Government's role is to give Queensland businesses certainty, combined with sufficient and proportionate regulation to enable business and industry to achieve their goals.

**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 1**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MR KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION (MR POWELL)——

QUESTION:

Will the Minister develop a new code of practice to allow council to shoot flying foxes, as per page 3 of the SDS Environment & Protection for “protection of humans”?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government’s new approach will give councils an as-of-right authority to manage roosts in designated urban areas. This simply means that councils will not need to apply to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection for a permit to manage a roost in these areas.

The designation of urban areas recognises firstly that it is in these areas, where people live, that conflict is most likely and that action may be necessary.

Non-lethal dispersal or modification of flying-fox roosts has proven to be an effective method of relieving wellbeing impacts from flying-foxes. Examples can be found in recent successful dispersals at Warwick and Pittsworth.

Roost management, especially dispersal, is a complex undertaking that requires considerable thought, planning and resources. A number of recent actions by councils and others have shown that it can be done without harm to flying-foxes, without jeopardising their broader biological role, and with a successful outcome for affected community members.

Outside of the designated urban areas, councils may still apply for a permit to manage a roost, which will be assessed by the department.

Other non-council groups may also still apply for a permit, as is currently the case. All permit applications will be assessed under revised, streamlined processes.

These proposals will relieve councils of the red tape burden they have experienced to date in these matters.

The Queensland Government reintroduced lethal take of flying-foxes as a last resort for the purpose of crop protection and with tight quotas.

Broad-scale culling of flying-foxes for the purposes of roost management in urban areas is not being considered.



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 2**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MR KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister ensure that the Biodiversity Overlays in the Regional Planning Schemes will not lock up any agricultural land when triggered under the new planning schemes?

ANSWER:

This matter falls under the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning's portfolio. I refer the member to the relevant Minister.



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 3**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 63 of the Capital Statement which shows a significant underspend in land acquisitions for environmental purposes; will the Minister (a) provide an explanation for the significant underspend in all categories (Environment for the Future Land Acquisitions, Investing to Protect Koalas and Other Acquisitions) and (b) provide a list of all properties acquired by his department in all three categories during the 2012-13 financial year including purchase price and environmental significance?

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's acquisition program is focussed on outcomes and based on the best available current science. The most important considerations is the long term resilience of our landscapes as climate and other influences change over time and on consolidating our existing protected areas to make them more viable and efficient to manage. The Queensland Government is also committed to ensuring its acquisition program is integrated with the capacity to property manage areas purchased.

A number of properties are currently under negotiation under the *Environment for the Future* program. When finalised, this investment will represent significant part of the \$17.2 million which is a three year commitment.

In addition, the department is in negotiations regarding several properties under the *Investing to Protect Koalas* program following an Expression of Interest process that resulted in over 160 applications. These are at various stages of negotiations and there is a secondary list should any of the priority properties not proceed.

The Other Acquisitions funding essentially comprises a refund from the federal government in late 2012 for earlier acquisitions made by Queensland under the *National Heritage Trust* program. Disposition of these funds has not yet been finalised due to the two priorities above and the need for a conservative approach to expenditure in the current fiscal environment.





**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 4**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS which shows a significant increase in the other revenue category for the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection alongside an overall fall in funding. I note that environmental licence revenue is now counted as controlled income which explains some of this increase; will the Minister explain all reasons why other revenue has increased so significantly and provide an itemised breakdown of this revenue?

ANSWER:

Page five of the SDS identifies an estimated increase in Other revenue of \$31.247M from the 2012-13 Budget to the 2013-14 Estimate for the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

Increases in revenue estimates include:

- \$33.015M for environmental license fee revenue;
- \$5.000M for expenditure recovered from the ClimateSmart Home Service; and
- \$0.335M for general recoveries of expenditure during the year.

The increase in environmental license fee revenue reflects the reclassification of these fees from Administered to Controlled revenue while the projected increase in expenditure recoveries reflect known circumstances at the time of the budget.

The above increases have been offset by estimated decreases in grants and other contributions of \$6.880M and user charges revenue of \$0.223M.

The reduction in anticipated grants and other contributions reflects known circumstances at the time of the budget and may change as the year unfolds. The decrease in user charges reflects a slightly more conservative outlook in this area.



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 5**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

Page 8 of the SDS shows a continued fall in the number of employees within the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. Will the Minister (a) explain whether any redundancies are associated with this further staff reduction (b) detail all positions which will be removed to meet this target by position title, location and salary level and (c) provide a percentage figure of the decrease in the overall workforce of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection since its formation under the Newman Government and inclusive of temporary positions?

ANSWER:

The SDS continued to show a fall because of an increased emphasis on red and green tape reduction and the re-alignment of business priorities for the department.

Potentially, reductions will occur across various divisions over the course of the year where the department can satisfy itself that an activity or service is no longer required, or where the same activity or service can be delivered smarter or more efficiently. It is expected that when positions are identified, they will be across a range of salary levels, locations and position titles. Any discussions regarding specific positions have only recently commenced.



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 6**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS and the Minister's commitment to introduce a new whole of government environmental offsets policy, will the Minister provide the following details of the offset programs currently in force and broken down over the past three financial years (a) the number of hectares offset (b) total in each regional locations, (c) estimated value of offset (d) type and number of development application, (e) number and amount of offsets paid out (f) number of instances where offsets could not be located and (g) number of projects which did not proceed due the inability to locate appropriate offsets.

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government currently administers a total of five offset policies that are designed to compensate for environmental values that have been lost as a result of impacts from development and mining. Offsets can only be agreed to if the developer can demonstrate that impacts have been avoided and mitigated as much as possible.

These policies include the overarching Queensland Government *Environmental Offsets Policy* that provides a supporting framework for the management of offsets throughout the state, as well as four specific issue policies that are administered across three government departments.

The policy for *Vegetation Management Offsets* falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Honourable Andrew Cripps MP, Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. The *Marine Fish Habitat Offsets Policy* falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Honourable John McVeigh MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The net gain of *Koala Habitat* in Southeast Queensland Policy is administered by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and delivered with the help of local governments. Under the SEQ Koala Conservation State Planning Regulatory Provisions and the State Planning Policy 2/10 local governments have been assigned the responsibility of assessing and maintaining koala offsets in South East Queensland. Records relating to koala offsets are therefore held by the relevant local governments.

The *Biodiversity Offsets Policy* is also administered by the department. As at 8 July 2013 there are no legally secured offset areas or offset payments received under the *Biodiversity Offsets Policy* to report.

This policy was introduced by the previous government on 3 October 2011. Legally secured offsets under the existing policy can take proponents a considerable period to finalise including the preparation and assessment of applications, sourcing of suitable offset areas and negotiation of outcomes with landholders.

**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 7**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS and the Minister's commitment to introduce a new whole of government environmental offsets policy, will the Minister detail the principles underpinning this whole-of-government approach in developing this new policy?

ANSWER:

In response to the review of the overarching framework for the *Queensland Biodiversity Offsets Policy* undertaken as part of the government's six month action (July to December 2012), the Queensland Government committed to a consolidation of the State's five separate offset policies for environmental matters.

Since then, the Queensland Government has actively engaged with key clients, including industry, environment and land management groups in the development of a new policy approach.

The review and subsequent development of a new approach has been driven by the following key principles:

- to continue the approach of avoid and mitigate impacts, before offsetting is allowed;
- to deliver a simpler and single offset policy;
- to remove duplication within the State approach, but more importantly to remove duplication with the Australian Government; and
- to ensure better strategic environmental outcomes for offsets.





**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 8**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS and the Great Barrier Reef; will the Minister detail (a) all projects within his department concerning the Great Barrier Reef, (b) the funding allocations for these projects (broken down by category) and (c) staffing allocations for each of these projects, broken down by position title, location and salary level?

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) contributes to a range of activities aimed at protecting the Great Barrier Reef. These activities come under the umbrella of the joint Queensland and Commonwealth Reef Water Quality Protection Plan (Reef Plan). EHP allocated \$14.137 million in 2012-13 to Reef Plan initiatives. This was part of the government's overall \$35 million commitment to Reef protection initiatives.

EHP's reef protection related activities include:

**Reef Water Quality Improvement Program** – The Reef Water Quality Improvement Program (formerly known as the Reef Protection Program) is EHP's major Reef Plan project which is assisting the grazing and sugar cane industries transition from current practices that results in poor catchment water quality to a best management practice (BMP) approach. This program is supported by strong science and extension programs delivered on EHP's behalf by the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). The adoption of best management practices by many farmers has already resulted in improvements to reef catchment water quality as demonstrated in the last two Reef Water Quality Report Cards.

**Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership** – The partnership will establish an independent, integrated, authoritative, transparent and trust-worthy assessment and reporting of the health of aquatic ecosystems in Gladstone Harbour, with a report card system based on the successful Southeast Queensland model. The program will also ensure priorities for actions to improve water quality are identified.

**Coastal Planning** – Queensland's coastal planning system provides direction and support to councils and state agencies when making planning and development

decisions in the coastal zone, including protection of areas of state and national environmental significance. Coastal planning and development policies are currently being transitioned into a single State Planning Policy. However, a coastal management plan is to be maintained to provide policy direction for natural resource managers to ensure they protect coastal resources on coastal reserves, beaches, esplanades and tidal areas.

**Queensland Wetlands Program (with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines)** – The Queensland Wetlands Program (QWP), a joint initiative of the Australian and Queensland Governments, supports projects and programs that enhance the sustainable management of Queensland's wetlands. Wetlands play a vital role in maintaining the health and water quality of the Reef and the targets in Reef Plan relating to wetlands reflect their importance. The QWP operates across different Queensland departments and other stakeholders and is coordinated through EHP. All tools, data and information are made freely available through the EHP web site *WetlandInfo*.

EHP has also been responsible for assessing development involving high impact earthworks that could damage wetlands of high ecological significance in catchments of the Great Barrier Reef. This role has recently transferred to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning under the State Assessment Referral Agency (SARA) arrangements.

**Environmental values** – The Queensland Government is preparing local scale environmental values, water quality objectives and aquatic ecosystems mapping for key reef catchments and associated coastal waters. Local environmental values, water quality objectives and spatial mapping for these key Great Barrier Reef regions will advance the protection of water quality at catchment level and reef water quality by informing:

- decision making for developments involving point source emissions under the *Environment Protection Act 1994*;
- Local Government planning and assessment decision making for urban land development under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*—addressing urban diffuse emissions;
- best practice management approaches to address diffuse emissions from rural lands, at the sub-catchment to paddock scale;
- local catchment water resource plans under the *Water Act 2000*; and
- regional scale management planning and decisions by Regional NRM bodies.

**Nature Refuges** – This program is the Queensland Government's primary voluntary conservation covenanting program where landholders can play a role in protecting the State's biodiversity by establishing a nature refuge on their property.

**Reef Plan oversight and support** – All of EHP's Reef Protection Plan actions and deliverables are coordinated, and support is provided to ensure the department's Reef Plan obligations are met.

**Everyone's Environment grants related to Reef Water Quality outcomes** – Projects funded under the *Everyone's Environment* grant program contribute to Reef Water quality outcomes through cleaning up creeks and waterways, the rehabilitation

and restoration of degraded local waterways, and through water quality monitoring. In Round One (2012-13), seven projects were funded that had a direct impact on reef water quality, with funding provided for a range of other projects achieving related environmental benefits.

Assessment of applications under Round Two of the *Everyone's Environment* grant program is underway.

**Cape York Environmental Planning** – During 2012-13, as part of the preparation of the Cape York Regional Plan, biodiversity and aquatic conservation assessments were undertaken to provide an integrated approach to balance development opportunities with the protection of the region's environmental values. The Cape York Regional Plan will deliver whole of government outcomes – including protection for the far northern section of the Great Barrier Reef.



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 9**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 3 of the SDS and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's responsibility to regulate the release of mine water, will the Minister list all non-compliant water releases his department has uncovered or been notified of in the 2012-13 financial year including the nature of the breach and any punitive action taken by his department?

ANSWER:

All of this information is contained within a Fitzroy River Catchment Wet Season Report which is compiled following each wet season. These reports are made publically available on the Queensland Government's Fitzroy River Website. The *Fitzroy River Catchment 2011-2012 Wet Season Report* is available at [www.fitzroyriver.qld.gov.au](http://www.fitzroyriver.qld.gov.au).



**AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES  
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING  
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 10**

**Notified on Tuesday, 2 July 2013**

---

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 3 of the SDS and the amendment of environmental legislation to streamline application and approval processes for environmentally relevant activities. Will the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of the differences between the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) Bill 2011 as introduced by former Minister, the Honourable Vicky Darling on 26 October 2011 and the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) Bill 2012 as introduced by the Minister on 29 of May 2012?

ANSWER:

The 2012 Amendment Bill was consistent in policy intent with the earlier Bill as both were designed to provide clearer and simpler approval processes for a range of businesses in Queensland. However, the 2012 Bill made a number of changes to improve the new approval processes and ensure a seamless transition:

- definitions of “eligible ERA” and “ineligible ERA” were inserted;
- the previous operation of the powers of the Coordinator General were retained;
- a “declaration” (not statutory) applies for online lodgement of documents;
- the timeframe for an appeal was increased to 20 business days;
- the Land Court is not required to make a decision if objections are withdrawn;
- an environmental authority can be amended for any reason, with consent;
- consideration of contaminated land issues in the surrender of environmental authorities was retained as previously reflected in the Act;
- amendments were made to facilitate online registers;
- the anniversary date can be amended with consent, as previously reflected in the Act;
- the assessment of suitability for the suitable operator register is always maintained by the department, rather than a local government for some applications;
- amendments were made to clarify the power to make statutory guidelines;
- new provisions were inserted to improve the transition to the new process; and
- a number of minor edits.