



Speech by

Hon. Kate Jones

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Wednesday, 2 September 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (9.51 am): The Great Barrier Reef is internationally recognised as an unrivalled phenomenon with outstanding natural, social and economic values. It is priceless to the people of Queensland and Australia. I, along with the Premier and the Hon. Peter Garrett, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, will later today be jointly releasing the *Great Barrier Reef outlook report*. This outlook report, which is the first of its kind, provides a comprehensive assessment of the state of the Great Barrier Reef—an assessment of our current management and, as the name implies, the future outlook for the Great Barrier Reef. The report identifies that the reef is generally in good condition but highlights that we may see the health of the reef decline significantly over the next 50 years unless we take strong and effective management action now. It was no surprise that the overwhelming area of concern highlighted by this report is climate change. Whilst effective global action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is critical to the reef's future, continued strong management of the reef and its adjacent catchments is absolutely essential to build resilience to withstand and adapt—

Mr ELMES: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I have to say again that the words that the minister is using are very close to some of the words that are being used within the Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Bill, and I would ask for your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In view of the fact that there is a bill before the House, I would ask the minister to make sure that her words do not anticipate the discussion on that bill.

Ms JONES: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I made no reference to the bill before the House. The outlook report specifically identifies that two priority issues for management are to improve the quality of water flowing into the reef from adjacent catchments and to protect our key coastal habitats. We all understand—

Mr ELMES: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Is it the same point of order?

Mr ELMES: I am sorry, Mr Speaker, but this is going to the core of what is the Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Bill.

Mr SPEAKER: I will seek a ruling from the Clerk after we examine the bill.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Under the standing orders, the member is quite entitled to take that point of order. I would ask the minister, in view of the fact that it is impossible for us to get across the detail of the bill, to ensure that the ministerial statement that she is making does not anticipate the discussion on that bill.

Ms JONES: I thank the Speaker for his ruling. I was actually referring to the outlook report, which we will be releasing today. We all understand that the projected growth in population and economic activity

along the coast, combined with the likely impacts of rising sea levels associated with climate change, will continue to place pressure on Queensland's coastal zones. In response to these increasing pressures, I recently released a draft Queensland coastal plan to improve planning for urban developments in coastal locations. By using up-to-date projections from climate change science, this draft plan incorporates action to address the risks that climate change impacts pose to the lifestyle of Queenslanders and our valuable coastal areas. This highlights just one example of how this government is willing to tackle the tough issues identified in the outlook report.

Later today, in conjunction with my federal colleague, the Hon. Peter Garrett, I will be releasing a joint government response to the outlook report of which I have been talking about this morning. Through this, we have committed to protecting the ongoing health of Queensland's icon and one of the wonderful natural assets of the world—the Great Barrier Reef.