



Speech by

## Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Wednesday, 3 August 2011

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### MOTION: ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENERGY COMMITTEE, REPORTING DATE

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.48 pm): I rise to oppose the motion that is before the House and to do so in the strongest terms. This motion is a farce. On a day that we are supposedly celebrating a more transparent parliament and a more transparent and open committee system, where both parliamentarians and the general public as a whole get to review legislation before the House, we see this motion brought forward. We see this lazy government stumbling at its first hurdle on one of the biggest bills to be introduced to this House this session.

We know why this bill is urgent. It is not because of a predetermined implementation date of 1 December 2011; it is because, ultimately, it is a tax—a tax that is going to feed the coffers of this tired Labor government so that it can spend it not only on waste recycling but also on various other activities that it has had planned for many years. This is a broken promise. This is another Labor broken promise. The government is on the record saying in the lead-up to the last election that it would not introduce a waste levy, that it would not introduce a waste tax. That is not unlike its federal colleagues, who went to the last federal election saying that they would not introduce a price on carbon, that they would not introduce—

**Ms SPENCE:** I rise to a point of order. I think the shadow minister is debating the legislation rather than the motion, which actually moves this legislation to a committee. He is clearly debating the substantive part of the legislation and that is for another occasion.

**Mr Seeney:** No. No, he is not.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Callide, I do not need your assistance. There is no point of order. The point of order should have been on relevance on which I would have ruled that the member for Glass House will come back to the motion before the House. There is nothing in this about a carbon tax. You will refer to the motion that is before the House. It is a procedural motion. The member for Glass House has the call.

**Mr POWELL:** I return to the intent for this legislation to be enacted by 1 December. The only reason for that is so that it can start feeding the coffers. What have members opposite been doing for the past 18 months on this issue? The estimated funding to be raised by this levy has been flagged in the budget papers for 18 months. Government members have had 18 months to introduce this piece of legislation. Just because they have been dillydallying does not mean that this House must rush through this urgent piece of legislation without the proper scrutiny under a new committee system that they themselves have brought in and in which they have encouraged members of the public to participate. And then at the first opportunity to provide the public with a chance to have a say on a piece of legislation that is going to impose further cost-of-living increases on each and every bill they pay—on top of all of the other cost-of-living increases we have seen, whether it be water, electricity, rego or fuel; this will be yet another burden on each and every individual in Queensland—those opposite are not giving the broader Queensland public the opportunity to have a fair say on this important piece of legislation. If ever a bill needed to be given careful and full consideration by a committee, this is it. It is the biggest legislative change for the waste

industry in over 20 years. As I said before, ultimately it is a tax; it is an impost on the cost of living for each and every Queenslanders.

The impacts of this bill are enormous. The relevant committee will have a conga line of stakeholders and members of the public wanting to address this bill. The minister has already mentioned them. However, the minister knows very well that there is a difference between consulting and hearing and then doing nothing, and consulting and actually taking on board the recommendations and suggestions of each and every one of those stakeholder groups that have already been approached and been involved in the system to date but have not had an opportunity to air their concerns in public about this dangerous piece of legislation. If we intend to rush it through in less than two months, they will not have an opportunity to air their concerns about this piece of legislation in public so that all can hear.

In line with the request of the Leader of the House for more public hearings, this bill offers the government an ideal opportunity to get out there and to hear the views of each and every Queenslanders when it comes to introducing a new waste tax. We should hold hearings not only here in Brisbane, where a lot of the peak organisations that the minister mentioned can attend, but also throughout Queensland. There could be hearings in Toowoomba. The Toowoomba Regional Council could explain how it is going to have trouble implementing this waste tax because it is still struggling with the amalgamation of its councils and with bringing together a regional waste strategy. We could have hearings on the Sunshine Coast or in Cairns where there are likely to be significant impacts on their alternative waste technology.

This bill does not need to be rushed through. This bill needs to be thought through carefully. It needs to go through the new committee system because the people of Queensland and the stakeholders need proper consideration on this.

**Ms Darling:** It is going to committee.

**Mr POWELL:** Going before a committee for less than six weeks does not constitute going to a committee. It should be up to the committee to determine how long it requires to address this bill properly. As the Leader of the House has said, it should consider how much public input should be garnered in the consideration of this bill. The committee needs to decide how long it needs for this process based on its workload. It is not for this government to determine a bill of significance urgent, and definitely not on a day like today.