



Speech by


Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Tuesday, 5 June 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.51 am): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and happy World Environment Day to you, to all members in this chamber and to all Queenslanders. The Great Barrier Reef is an important part of Queensland's extraordinary natural heritage, and this government is committed to ensuring the reef continues to be one of the best managed marine protected areas in the world. The reef is the world's largest living organism and an international tourism icon supporting more than 50,000 jobs and is worth around \$5 billion yearly to our economy. However, having such an extraordinary environmental asset on our doorstep brings great responsibility.

This government is committed to ensuring that the Great Barrier Reef is cared for and protected. I, along with my LNP colleagues, want to ensure the Great Barrier Reef can be enjoyed today, tomorrow and for many generations to come. There are, as the Premier mentioned earlier, a wide range of management strategies in place to protect the reef which we are committed to continuing or enhancing. This government is committed to the targets and outcomes of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan signed in 2003. This government is committed to ongoing funding for the reef, and this government will support industries like the beef and sugar industries to achieve better environmental and economic outcomes, because we know that working with farmers, not against them, gets real results.

We must also ensure, of course, that future developments along the coast of this great state occur in accordance with best environmental management practice. The draft report of the World Heritage Committee's Reactive Monitoring Mission released over the weekend recognised the sound management arrangements already in place. As the Premier announced again this morning, this government has committed to continuing to work with the Australian government on protecting the Great Barrier Reef while at the same time removing unnecessary overlap and duplication in development assessments.

I say again that this government understands that you can balance environmental protection with sensible, workable regulation. Areas such as Gladstone harbour have significant natural resources and industrial activity that support the state's economic, environmental and social development. As we are all aware, Gladstone is an example of the challenges this government and this state are faced with, which is why this government has lifted the bar on environmental monitoring and protection in Gladstone. As announced by the Premier, we will be establishing a healthy waterways partnership for Gladstone harbour. I am confident that we can carefully manage these activities for the benefit of all Queenslanders while ensuring the World Heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef are protected for the enjoyment of future generations.

This government is committed to excellence—excellence in protecting the environment while removing unnecessary green tape and growing a strong economy to get this once-great state back on track. In closing, it is fitting and timely that I remind the House today, on World Environment Day, of the words of respected entrepreneur Steve Jobs—words that strike a cord with me as Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection; words that apply to this can-do government; and words I am pleased to say that since the March election can now be applied in this chamber: 'Be a yardstick of quality. Some people are not used to an environment where excellence is expected.'