



Speech by

# Hon. Andrew Powell


MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Tuesday, 21 August 2012

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Environmental Protection

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (10.37 am): The Environment and Heritage Protection portfolio is doing its bit to help small business, the largest employers in our state. The Greentape Reduction Project, including the legislation that was passed by this House recently, will cut red tape and regulation by up to 20 per cent and deliver savings for Queensland businesses that amount to as much as \$11.7 million each year. I am pleased to advise that the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection will introduce a new licensing approach that moves away from the onerous system of years gone by towards a model that is more proportionate to risk. It means small businesses can get on with doing what they do best: generating jobs and stimulating the economy, not filling out forms and dealing with democracy.

Under this government, low-risk businesses can now be automatically approved to operate under standard conditions that take into account the risks associated with the activity. Approximately half of all small to medium sized businesses which used to be regulated under Labor are now eligible, with savings as high as \$19,000 per business from reduced application costs alone. It is likely that there will be further savings that result from removing time delays and administrative costs. For Queensland businesses that are currently operating under an environmental authority and development permit for environmentally relevant activity there is new flexibility. By splitting the environmental authority and development permit, registered operators will hold the environmental authority but the development approval will remain attached to the land. This means an operator will be able to apply directly to amend its environmental authority without affecting its development approval. This provides greater certainty to allow companies to invest in innovations that may also provide the added benefit of improved environmental outcomes. Our 2,400 small miners in Queensland, such as the opal and gem miners, will no longer be required to submit a plan of operations. This will remove a 15-page administrative requirement from around 2,400 operators.

But we are not resting on our laurels; we are also reviewing activities that require environmental licenses under the Environmental Protection Act, including such businesses as motor business and cabinet-makers. They will operate in accordance with environmental standards but will no longer have administrative requirements to apply for a licence, pay annual fees and submit annual returns. We are also addressing advice triggers which alone may reduce the number of referrals to EHP by over 1,200 a year.

In summary, this government is committed to greater flexibility in dealing with environmental approvals to deliver substantial savings for small and medium sized businesses across Queensland. Under this LNP government the message is simple: Queensland is open for business. We will get this state back on track and environmental regulation will be an enabler of, not a roadblock to, sustainable development.