



Speech by


Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Wednesday, 12 September 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.25 pm): This budget is a turning point for Queensland. It sets a course that will navigate the state away from a future of debt and deficit and back to prosperity. It is a U-turn from the path that was set by a wasteful Labor government—a government that put green political preferences ahead of true environmental outcomes, a government that was happy to borrow and spend while increasing green tape and strangling economic growth. Whether it was travel, consultancies or contractors' fees, the former department of environment and resource management was feeding the debt and deficit of the previous Bligh Labor government.

In breaking up the department of environment and resource management and establishing a new environmental regulator—the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection—this government has not only improved accountability of environmental standards but also ensured we as a government are more accountable on the ways in which taxpayers' money is spent. By cutting duplication of programs with the federal government, by cutting unnecessary green tape and by cutting the level of government debt we can deliver sustainable economic development and real environmental outcomes for all Queenslanders.

In Environment and Heritage Protection we have found savings of around \$20 million—\$20 million that ensures we can continue to acquire more protected area estate for this wonderful state of Queensland, \$20 million that ensures we can deliver our \$12 million Everyone's Environment grants program, \$20 million that ensures we can invest in coal seam gas regulation and in wildlife management across this great state. We are refocusing the department's core purpose to be a strong environmental regulator facilitating appropriate, sustainable development while also being a protector of Queensland's heritage. This shift away from the doom of old includes a commitment that environmental regulation will be an enabler of, and not a roadblock to, sustainable development.

Refocusing priorities and aligning expenditure to priority areas means we can better protect our environment for the future. Where companies are doing the right thing, my department will not be a roadblock to economic recovery and growth, but we need to allocate resources to ensure growth happens in a measured way that is respectful of landholders and the environment. We need to fix the state's foundations now to ensure the next generations of Queenslanders are given the opportunity to enjoy the spectacular natural environment we appreciate today.

This budget shows that we can be fiscally prudent, pro environment and pro business and that these elements are not mutually exclusive. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection as a strong environmental regulator will ensure that a healthy environment is an essential part of a robust Queensland economy.