




Speech by

Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2012

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (8.55 pm): I, too, rise to address report No. 11 of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee as it pertains to the 2012-13 budget estimates. From the outset I acknowledge the chair, Ian Rickuss, the member for Lockyer, all of the committee members and particularly the committee staff. Again, I draw particular attention to Rob Hansen as the committee research director. I had wanted to spend this time talking about a number of things. I wanted to speak about how this government continues to remain committed to strong environmental regulation that supports long-term sustainable economic growth in this state. I had wanted to talk about how this budget shows that you can be fiscally prudent, that you can be pro environment and—heaven forbid—that you can also be pro business and that these elements are not mutually exclusive. I had wanted to talk about how my department has looked at better ways to do its business through streamlining and reform, how we have looked at ways to do more with less and to engage and utilise our very talented people to focus on positive environmental outcomes rather than short-sighted environmental policies to garner Greens preferences.

Rather, I am compelled to focus on the dissenting report made by the member for South Brisbane and some of the comments just made by the member for Bundamba because they are pure farcical fiction. There is nothing in this dissenting report that can be in any way based on anything that was actually discussed at the estimates hearing itself. The member for Gympie recently spoke about the opposition's inability or failure to grasp simple concepts, and I am again drawn to the dissenting report to demonstrate just how true that is. The member for South Brisbane raises under the subheading 'Protecting the Great Barrier Reef—no one's responsible' the imputation that this government is not interested in protecting the Great Barrier Reef. No-one is responsible? Let me say that there are at least three, if not four, ministers in this cabinet in the Newman LNP government who have a very important role in ensuring that the Great Barrier Reef—that huge tourist boon for our great state, not to mention the wonderful environmental and natural asset that it is—continues to be protected. I have a role as the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. My colleague the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines has a role. Why? He is the Minister for Natural Resources. He works with the natural resource management groups in each of the bioregions around the state. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has a responsibility. Why? He is responsible for fish habitats and fisheries.

Mr Elmes: He's not!

Mr POWELL: He is, member for Noosa. Heaven forbid, we also have a Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Why? She is the minister for science. The scientists responsible for monitoring water quality in the Great Barrier Reef catchment sit within that minister's portfolio.

Do members know what the difference is? Ministers in the Newman LNP government talk to each other. Heaven forbid, our departments talk to each other! Do members know why? We know that through partnerships we will deliver far better outcomes for the Great Barrier Reef than the Labor Party ever could.

Another reason the agriculture minister is involved is that he knows that, by working with me, we can deliver economic benefits to agricultural production in the Great Barrier Reef catchment while delivering environmental outcomes.

Similarly, those opposite could not get their heads around the fact that planning sits with the planning minister. Heaven forbid, planning sits with the planning minister! Are there environmental responsibilities? You bet. As the environment minister I have input into coastal planning and, similarly, protecting Cape York. The member for South Brisbane cannot understand that this government has chosen to ensure that we get the balance right on the cape—managing economic development with conservation, with the protection of the environment, through a statutory regional plan. Who has responsibility for statutory regional planning? The Deputy Premier does. Does that mean that my responsibilities are abdicated? Not at all. It means that I work alongside my cabinet colleagues to ensure that we get the balance right.

If only I had more time to talk about mine water. The members opposite seem to think that it is something that has only recently occurred. It occurred each and every day under the ALP Bligh Labor government and we will continue to monitor that with the most judicious environmental standards possible.

(Time expired)