



Speech by


Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Tuesday, 13 November 2012

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (12.36 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012 and the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 [[1564](#)].

Tabled paper: Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[1565](#)].

It is with great delight that I bring this bill to the House today which formally delivers on our election commitment to cut the cost of living for all Queenslanders. We committed from day one—when this tax was first proposed—to repealing it and we have done just that.

Introduced in December 2011, Labor's waste tax was another broken promise from a tired government that was desperate for Greens preferences in the months before an election. The tax hit Queensland businesses and household budgets at a time when all sectors were struggling in an already overregulated environment. That is why this government made it a priority to scrap the tax, and in July this year we took the first step by reducing the levy rate to zero.

Completing this repeal involves amendments to the waste act to remove the head of power for a levy and now redundant provisions relating to the calculation, verification and remittance of the tax. In addition, it provides more flexibility around statutory obligations and simplifies the regulatory burden in relation to data-reporting requirements. This is just another demonstration that this government is committed to freeing metropolitan and regional Queensland communities of cumbersome red tape.

Further, this bill seeks to amend the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012. The amendments in this bill will ensure clear and consistent drafting and a smooth transition to the new system introduced by this act in July 2012 and due to commence in March 2013.

The extra amendments will allow additional flexibility. For example, an operator will be able to suspend their operations in circumstances where it is not viable to continue in the short term and when there are no ongoing environmental management issues. This will be particularly important to operators in the intensive agricultural sector where volatile market prices quickly impact on this core Queensland industry. This is a strong contribution to ensuring that we are supporting the growth of a four-pillar economy especially in times of economic hardship.

This bill also introduces further transitional amendments to continue the effect of existing codes of environmental compliance until they are remade by my department and to ensure that operators who have surrendered their registration certificates in circumstances where they had suspended, but not abandoned, the activity can apply to suspend the environmental authority.


Other amendments include the introduction of a new offence where tenure is transferred automatically under the resources legislation and the tenure holder does not become a registered suitable operator before carrying out the activities. This amendment is consequential to the amendments introduced by the Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Act 2012 for non-assessable transfers. It ensures that the holder of tenure, and therefore the environmental authority, who has obtained the tenure under a non-assessable transfer cannot carry out the activities under the environmental authority until the holder has been assessed and registered as a suitable operator.

In the context of the review of the environmentally relevant activities, or ERAs, that I announced in my introduction speech on the Greentape Reduction Act, this bill includes a provision to allow some ERAs to be prescribed as non-transitional ERAs in a regulation. This will preserve the existing development conditions as conditions of a development permit in the event that the ERAs are deleted after the commencement of the act.

Amendments to the Coastal Protection and Management Act will allow for the creation of self-assessable codes for the Integrated Development Assessment System, or IDAS, under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009. This will allow low-risk development—and I stress low-risk development—to proceed according to a set of standard criteria without requiring a development approval. Associated amendments are required to allow the right to use and occupy state coastal land where the activities comply with the self-assessable code. Coastal values will still be protected through the standard conditions of the self-assessment code.

This bill is another step in our pursuit to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden on Queensland while supporting the growth of a four-pillar economy and protect the environment. It will relieve business and industry of any possibility of paying a waste tax by completing the repealing process. It provides operators with the necessary flexibility needed to endure the economic road ahead. Finally, it will free up low-risk development while maintaining coastal values. This bill represents strong environmental management supporting sustainable economic development. I commend this bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (12.41 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.