



Speech by


Hon. Campbell Newman

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Wednesday, 6 June 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Major Projects, Environmental Protection

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.06 pm): This government believes that we can have superior environmental protection and projects that deliver economic benefits for Queensland. We have been given a huge mandate to deliver on these projects, but we have made it very, very clear—and I said this in a speech I gave to the Queensland Resources Council last year when I handed down our resources and energy policy—that we will be expecting world's best practice environmental outcomes. Since we have become the government we have demonstrated our commitment. Let us have a look at some of the things we have already done.

Firstly, we made the hard decision on Abbot Point, to scale back the environmentally irresponsible approach that we saw from the previous government. Remember, Anna Bligh talked about 400 million tonnes of coal going out through that port each year. It is no wonder Greenpeace and co. have been running around playing merry hell with the poor old federal minister for the environment and worrying UNESCO about shipping through the Great Barrier Reef. No wonder people are worried. Currently, only about 180 million tonnes of coal is exported from Queensland, and Anna Bligh and Labor were saying that 400 million tonnes were going out. The Deputy Premier has scaled that back so that we have an environmentally and commercially appropriate and responsible proposal. Today honourable members will hear from the Deputy Premier about his sensible, pragmatic and, most importantly, environmentally responsible response to how we will get coal from the Galilee Basin to the coast without a plethora of railway lines crisscrossing beautiful farmland between the Galilee Basin and those port facilities. I look forward to hearing from the Deputy Premier.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I highlighted yesterday that we will see better management of the Gladstone port to deal with the environmental issues that the people opposite me interjecting right now could never deal with because they took their hands off the steering wheel. We are delivering better outcomes for turtles and dugongs and also dealing with those animal cruelty issues, and of course we are committed to statutory regional plans to protect that vital cropping land. What I am saying is that this government believes in the development of Queensland, but we will do it in an environmentally responsible manner. Under the bilateral agreement that Queensland holds with the federal government, we have followed the correct steps. After four years of detailed assessment and environmental studies we simply want to get the project going, and that is what Queensland wants. That is the can-do way. It is about jobs for Queenslanders and the opportunity for struggling small business owners who rely on Queensland having an economy that goes forward. We want the project to go ahead—and we want it to happen quickly—but we have demonstrated that this will not happen at the expense of strong environmental conditions.

That is why tomorrow the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Environment will go to Sydney to meet with federal environment minister, Tony Burke, with the Coordinator-General and with officials to get this project going, to find out what Minister Burke wants—to sit down in a spirit of cooperation, establish what the issues of concern are for the minister and to find a way forward. At the end of the day, we simply

want to see it happen and we know that many of the minister's federal colleagues have said that they want to see it happen as well. The government is quite within its rights to insist that the federal government listen to what we have to say. We were elected recently with a very strong mandate to get this state going and we are not going to waste time playing silly political games with the federal government. Queensland needs a fair go, the project needs a fair go and hardworking men and women in Queensland need the opportunity for jobs that this project offers.