



Speech by


## Darren Grimwade

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Hansard Wednesday, 11 July 2012

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### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GREENTAPE REDUCTION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (4.52 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill paves the way for the LNP government's commitment to cut red tape and regulation by 20 per cent in Queensland. The new regulation framework for environmentally relevant activities presented in the bill offers a substantial reduction in green tape, along with savings for Queensland businesses that amount to \$11.7 million each year.

Queensland small businesses in particular will see numerous benefits from this bill. For instance, the new licensing approach in the bill moves away from the current, often onerous, system towards a model that is proportionate to risk. This means that if a person is planning to start a small business in Queensland and they fall into the category of a low-risk business, with lower environmental impacts—such as a motor vehicle workshop or a small fuel storage facility—this bill introduces a much simpler, standard application process. Eligible low-risk businesses can be automatically approved to operate under a set of standard conditions that take into account the risks associated with their activities alone.

**Mr Ruthenberg:** Common sense.

**Mr GRIMWADE:** I take the interjection from the honourable member for Kallangur. It is a common-sense approach to government and that is what we are about here.

The key point here is that the new licensing translates to big savings for small to medium businesses. Approximately half of all small to medium businesses that are currently regulated will be eligible, with savings as high, as we just heard, as \$19,000 per business from reduced application costs alone. That is a massive saving for all small businesses that are planning to grow their businesses here in Queensland. There are likely to 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 an environmentally relevant activity, the bill provides tremendous flexibility. The bill effectively splits the environmental authority and development permit so that registered operators will hold the environmental authority, but the development approval will remain attached to the land. This means that any amendments to the environmental authority or any transfers can now be made with greater ease.

As an example, consider a landfill site that would like to introduce drum conditioning on site to recycle and onsell the drums—therefore in reality providing an environmental benefit as well as a financial profit to that business. Currently, adding these innovations to its landfill site requires the operator to apply for a material change of use of the development permit under the Sustainable Planning Act and pay a corresponding fee. This applies despite the fact that the primary use of the site will not change from being a landfill and that the emissions to the environment will actually be reduced. The changes proposed in this bill mean that the operator will be able to apply directly to amend their environmental authority without affecting its development approval.

**Mr Berry:** A win-win.

**Mr GRIMWADE:** I take the interjection. It is a win-win for businesses that are looking to grow their businesses and start up in Queensland. The savings for businesses are estimated to be around \$5,000. There will be the added benefits of greater certainty in terms of the application process, assessment and timing. This provides greater certainty to allow companies to invest in innovations that may also provide added benefit or improved environmental outcomes for the business.

For our 2,400 small miners in Queensland, such as the opal and gem miners, the bill removes the requirements for a plan of operation. This will remove a 15-page administrative requirement from around 2,400 operators in Queensland. This means that a total of 36,000 pages of red tape will also be removed. This bill will delete three chapters from the Environmental Protection Act and essentially remove 90 pages of regulation.

The LNP is a party that understands that we need to take our feet off the throat of small business. We are a party that understands that for far too long—in fact the last 20 years—small and medium businesses in Queensland have had the foot of the government placed on their throat. This was suffocating those businesses in Queensland. We as a party understand that businesses need to decide how to run their businesses. By effectively reducing the red tape and regulation placed on them and allowing them to make decisions at a smaller cost, this will bring additional benefits to all businesses in Queensland and subsequently employment opportunities.

Our government wants to make it easier and cheaper for business to operate in Queensland. That is something that has not happened for the last 20 years under the previous government. In summary, the flexibility provided by this bill translates to a much simpler licensing approach that will deliver substantial savings to small to medium businesses right across Queensland. It is for this reason that I am pleased to commend this bill to the House today.