



Speech by

**Hon. Jeff Seeney**


**MEMBER FOR CALLIDE**

Hansard Thursday, 21 June 2012

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Great Barrier Reef

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (10.04 am): The Great Barrier Reef is truly one of the world's greatest treasures. Queenslanders, more than anyone else in the world, know this because it is our greatest treasure and one of our greatest assets. It therefore should not need to be said that every Queenslanders knows of the importance of protecting and caring for this vast living natural wonder and every Queenslanders is committed to protecting its future.

This government will safeguard the reef's future, as every Queenslanders would expect us to do. It is part of our home and we will protect it as such. We will not shy away from or shirk the responsibility that we have to future generations. But in protecting the Great Barrier Reef we will not walk away from our responsibility to grow the economy of Queensland. We will not walk away from our responsibility to provide for the future prosperity of generations of Queenslanders. What this government will do is ensure that the development necessary to support that prosperity occurs in a planned, responsible and balanced way—always ensuring that the environment is considered, protected and cared for.

UNESCO released its report on the Great Barrier Reef after a very short visit by a very small delegation earlier this year. I point out that it has been a Labor government in power in Queensland for almost all of the last 20 years. The care of the Barrier Reef has been in the Labor Party's hands. The only reason we are talking about the UNESCO report this morning is that the Bligh and Beattie governments and their federal counterparts, including Minister Tony Burke, failed to properly inform UNESCO of planned developments around Gladstone.

Foremost among UNESCO's concerns and noted in the report was the project developments at Abbot Point, where the former Labor government proposed 10 new coal terminals which would have provided for a capacity of 400 million tonnes of coal exports a year—a trebling of Queensland's coal exports through one port. They also proposed a multicargo port facility that would have required dredging of 40 million cubic metres of seabed to enable the construction of 12 shipping berths.

The UNESCO report was written before this government halted those irresponsible plans. The report that we are discussing this morning was written before the responsible LNP government shelved the irresponsible plans that were put forward by the ALP government. We have taken the Abbot Point coal terminals known as T4 to T10 off the agenda. We have also taken the multicargo facility off the agenda, opting instead for a much more measured and smaller scale development. That is the balanced, reasonable, incremental approach that this government brings to the issue of development and care for the environment.

Further still, we have removed from the drawing board four of the six rail corridors that Labor was prepared to let loose across the Galilee Basin because it could not make sensible, responsible decisions

about how the resources of this region should be developed. We have made those sensible, responsible decisions.

Minister Burke has expressed some concern about this government's approval of the Alpha Coal Project and its possible impacts on the reef. Again I point out that the Queensland Coordinator-General has placed strict conditions on the Alpha development that ensure all of the matters raised are mitigated and the effects minimised. There are clear erosion and run-off controls placed on this project in the Coordinator-General's report, and those erosion and run-off controls apply to all of the development including the rail line at Abbot Point.

I reiterate: the Great Barrier Reef is part of Queensland and it is part of our heritage. We will ensure it is cared for and we will ensure it is preserved for future generations of Queenslanders and the world. Let me conclude by quoting Keith De Lacy, a former Labor Treasurer of this state, who wrote about the reef recently—

... it is a massive self-correcting eco-system with great powers of renewal. It is under no threat from fishing or tourism or shipping.

Keith De Lacy was right. I could not agree with him more. The Barrier Reef will certainly be under no threat from any further development proposals that this government may approve.