




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Budget

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.23 pm): I am pleased to stand before the House today on World Environment Day, excited about what the year ahead holds. The Newman government is unashamedly focused on economic growth, rebuilding Queensland and making our communities more resilient. As I said yesterday, as the environment minister my focus is on helping grow the economy whilst ensuring the state's environment is protected and maintained. In the coming financial year the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection will have an operating budget of \$171 million and a capital budget of \$30 million, and we will continue to do more with less. Unlike those opposite, we do not believe a bloated government is the way forward. Whilst they operated under the premise of being a Smart State, as an example, there was nothing smart about an Office of Climate Change that clearly demonstrated their bloated approach to running the public sector—an office with a budget in 2011-12 of \$64.7 million that employed 141 staff. That is \$64.7 million that not only duplicated the carbon tax but that could have been spread across conservation and the delivery of front-line services. Now that would have been smart!

The LNP's way is about strategic thinking, careful planning, a committed approach and putting resources where they are needed the most. By redirecting funding to practical, common-sense programs that provide positive outcomes, we not only improve Queensland's natural and built environment but we continue to deliver front-line services and continue to act as a strong environmental regulator supporting long-term economic growth. This coming financial year we have committed \$10 million to the reef protection program, which is part of the Newman government's \$35 million per year commitment to the Great Barrier Reef plan—a project aimed at ensuring the reef continues to be among the best managed protected areas in the world. We have put an extra million dollars on the table for the second round of Everyone's Environment grants projects, with a total of \$4 million set aside to fund projects in communities across the state. We have committed \$11.7 million to continue to increase available koala habitat through the acquisition of suitable land under the Koala Habitat Program. We have dedicated \$10.7 million for protected land acquisitions which support the government's Investing in Our Environment for the Future commitment. We have invested \$3.7 million for the regulation of the coal seam gas industry. We have announced \$2.5 million as part of a two-year \$4 million commitment to the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership to maintain and continuously improve harbour health. We will spend \$2 million per year for water quality improvement projects in South-East Queensland.

Like every other department, we too have to meet the state's financial challenges. By adopting a number of cost-saving measures, by focusing on outcomes and not prescriptive conditions for approvals, by concerning ourselves with green outcomes and not green preferences, we will meet these challenges head-on. The Newman government will continue to build a stronger state and, by implementing policies aimed at fostering a more resilient environment, we will work together for the good of all Queenslanders from here and into the future.