




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

**APPROPRIATION BILLS: AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE**

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.16 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to spell out just how the Newman government is working to protect and promote Queensland's environment. Unlike the previous Labor government's flawed model of managing the environment—referred to as DERM—the Environment and Heritage Protection portfolio is doing exactly what it says it will, and that is to protect not only our environment but also our built heritage.

The Newman government has drawn a line of accountability in the environment portfolio. We are seeking to be more transparent. We are not allowing the lines to be muddled, because we all know what happens if there is poor accountability and a lack of transparency. You have mismanagement and poor administration, and you have a \$1.2 billion payroll bungle.

We will continue to do more with less in EHP. We will not shy away from these facts because, as the Treasurer and the Premier and I have said, bloated government is not the answer. Throwing taxpayers' dollars to govern is not the answer. Expecting that the public sector could sustain eight per cent growth year in and year out is clearly not the answer. How we do business is the answer. Being smarter and more agile and by adopting a well thought out risk management approach is how you achieve far better outcomes—both environmental outcomes and economic outcomes.

Unlike Labor, this government does not seek to bury business under a bundle of bureaucratic processes. Instead, the Newman government is taking a customer focused approach. In my department we now ask, 'How can we help you?'—not 'How can we stop you, delay you or frustrate you?' With some \$18 billion worth of projects under assessment by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, it is vital that we get the approval settings right and cut through the myriad nonsense green-tape barriers that were put in place by the previous tired Labor government.

Another way this government is assisting the people of Queensland is by being open and transparent. No longer is complicated data hidden on departmental databases. Instead, information is available on our website for everyone to access. It is somewhat disturbing then that the member for South Brisbane continues to posture and fabricate untruths around the issue of mine water releases.

Despite trying to explain it to the member on numerous occasions, including providing departmental officers face to face to both her and the member for Rockhampton, the member for South Brisbane continues to weave a web of exaggeration and hysteria, continues to speculate and to exaggerate to score cheap political points and would do well to dwell on the fact that it was indeed her government that oversaw some 20 years of mining approvals in the Fitzroy Basin—20 years of overseeing the regulatory framework that led to legacy water becoming the issue that it has.

What does the member for South Brisbane do? She provides misleading and exaggerated responses that suggest I have neglected the issue. I strongly, categorically and definitively object to

this. Far from that, the ones who have neglected this issue are those opposite. Let me provide a simple factual and reasonable summary on the issue of Callide Dam as raised by the member for South Brisbane. The Callide mine has been authorised under its EA to release into Callide Dam since 2009. During the 2012-13 wet season there have been some non-compliant releases from the mine. Those releases were not authorised under any tool and they were due to exceptional rainfall in the catchment. We have issued four PINs for these non-compliant releases.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr POWELL: Let me get to that, member for South Brisbane. The total volume of water released in the dam was 500 megalitres through two separate releases that occurred between 25 January—that is, ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald—and 21 April. That is 0.3 per cent of the total water volume in the dam. Not all mine water releases from Callide mine end up in Callide Dam. The remainder of releases were downstream into Callide Creek. Only those releases from Dunn Creek Dam end up in the dam.

In relation to the volume of non-compliant releases, it is very difficult to calculate but only a small proportion of the volume was non-compliant. Callide Dam holds around 136,000 megalitres. It is important to note that in 2010-11 when Labor was in power more than 4,000 megalitres was released into the Callide Dam and the previous government did not inform the council due to the high dilution factor. The EA conditions have not changed to allow any additional releases.