




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.54 am): It gives me enormous pleasure to stand in the House this morning, buoyed by the weekend election result and the win by the coalition. As I said on Tuesday, it will be refreshing to work with a stable and grown-up Tony Abbott led federal government—a government that will make environmental decisions based on science and not opinion polls, a federal government that will be focused on good public policy and not grubby internal green politics.

The federal coalition has announced a long-term and practical commitment to environmental protection of the Great Barrier Reef, committing \$40 million for the creation of a reef trust as part of its Reef Plan 2050. As acknowledged by a number of third parties, the Newman government has taken decisive action to remedy the poor decisions made by the previous Labor government at the state level, and I am confident that measures outlined in Reef Plan 2050 will significantly complement the Newman government's reef protection efforts.

It is important to remember that it was on Labor's watch that concerns were first raised over the state of the Great Barrier Reef, and it is a matter of public record that the Australian public and the international community lost confidence in the reef's management under the former state and federal Labor governments. I intend to work hard with the federal environment minister to restore this confidence. The Newman government has done more to protect the Great Barrier Reef in 18 months than the previous state Labor government did in the previous 20 years.

The Newman government has clearly demonstrated our intention to protect the Great Barrier Reef. Aside from significantly scaling back the previous state government's crazy plans for a multicargo facility at Abbot Point—crazy plans that made no sense from either an economic or an environmental perspective—the Newman government committed to the objectives of the reef water quality plan and allocated \$35 million each year for reef initiatives.

This government has already successfully entered into best practice management agreements with the grazing and cane industries, working with and not against these industries to help reduce environmental impacts on the reef—real, practical, direct action. The draft Great Barrier Reef Ports Strategy was released late last year and we have established the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership—real, practical, direct action.

While we worked hard with the former federal government to deliver a comprehensive federal-state strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef, the measures announced by the coalition will go further. Our federal colleagues share our commitment to protect the reef and the jobs it supports. The reef trust will take a grown-up, strategic approach to conservation of coastal habitat and water quality whilst also adopting a holistic approach to turtle and dugong protection.

Queensland is a great state with great opportunity, and those opportunities will only be enhanced now there is certainty at the federal level. I look forward to working with the Abbott coalition government to deliver strong outcomes for Queensland, for the Great Barrier Reef and for this nation.