




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Office of Best Practice Regulation

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (10.09 am): Prior to the last election this government made a commitment to reduce red tape and regulation by 20 per cent. Why did we do that? Because we knew that business in Queensland was struggling to cope with the increasing weight of regulation being introduced by the previous Labor government, which was stifling investment and development. As part of that commitment the government has established the Office of Best Practice Regulation within the Queensland Competition Authority to routinely run the magnifying glass over existing and proposed regulations.

The Office of Best Practice Regulation—or OBPR—delivered its interim report in October last year. It pleases me to inform the House that the government recently received the OBPR's final report—a report that provides the government with the framework to establish an overarching regulatory management system to, in effect, try to stop the flow. The OBPR will provide an annual update that measures the government's progress. We are changing the culture of government from one that promotes red tape to one that actively reduces it. Championing this reform agenda is the Assistant Minister for Finance, Administration and Regulatory Reform, Deb Frecklington.

The Newman government will consider the OBPR's final report before formally responding to it, but it has already committed to adopting the majority of the report's 50 recommendations. The assistant minister will this week release a report card highlighting the Newman government's progress in its first year. It also details our plans for the next 12 months. For example, when bringing forward any proposal that imposes a new regulation or procedure on small business, ministers will now be required to put forward up to three options to reduce or offset regulatory burdens. A reduction target for each portfolio will also be included in the key performance indicators of directors general. Agencies will also need to seek the Office of Best Practice Regulation's advice as to whether a regulatory impact statement—or RIS—is required for any regulatory proposal.

Unlike those opposite who say one thing and do another, our actions underline our strong commitment to making Queensland an easier and simpler place in which to do business. Since coming to government we have fully implemented more than 150 red-tape reduction reforms. A further 170 reforms are currently underway. Some of these achievements include streamlining the approvals process for all environmentally relevant activities—or ERAs—saving on average \$20,000 in application costs, 150 pages of paperwork and 68 days of processing time. From 31 March, more than 9,400 small business operators will now no longer need to apply for a licence or pay an application fee and will no longer need to submit an annual return. These changes will save small businesses more than \$6 million in annual fees and will let them get on with what they do best: contributing to a thriving economy and generating jobs.

On Tuesday, parliament voted to remove the Bligh government's waste levy—a \$373 million tax on Queensland businesses. And, of course, one of the biggest reforms has been to increase the payroll tax exemption threshold to \$1.1 million this financial year, increasing over six years. The

payroll tax cut will increase job security, allowing small businesses to retain workers rather than lay them off. The member for Nanango has been working tirelessly in this space to ensure that all ministers work together to ensure that this great state is a great state with great opportunity and an attractive place in which to live, work and do business.