




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 4 March 2014

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.56 am): I would like to talk about the facts, the reef facts. It is a well-known fact that the Great Barrier Reef is Queensland's most treasured natural wonder and, as a World Heritage site, one of our most important international tourism icons. It is a fact that the reef supports some 67,000 jobs and generates some \$5.4 billion each and every year in tourism alone. It is also a fact that \$40 billion worth of exports are shipped out of our ports each and every year. Because of its natural beauty and because the waters in and adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are vital to Queensland's economy, it is important that the national and international community have confidence in how the reef is managed.

It is a fact that the Newman government is doing more to protect the Great Barrier Reef than any other state government has before it—a simple fact that needs to be recognised. But, unfortunately, this confidence is being undermined by extreme Greens and their Labor mates who continue to make outlandish and unsubstantiated claims about threats to the reef. These armchair reef experts resort to fear, falsehoods and exaggeration. When they do this, they tarnish our state's great reputation and they put at risk those same 67,000 jobs in the tourism industry that rely on visitors to our great state to visit the Great Barrier Reef.

This week I proudly launched the Queensland government's new reef facts website, which will provide the people of Queensland and the international community with the full facts on the Great Barrier Reef and our efforts to ensure that it remains the best managed marine ecosystem in the world. Unfortunately, the need for reef facts has emerged because we have seen a concerted campaign of misinformation being peddled by extreme groups and, sadly, by political parties who are using the reef as a campaign fundraising tool. Reef facts is a fact based source of information that will combat those who resort to cheap media grabs that threaten our reputation and threaten Queensland jobs.

The Newman government is providing an open and transparent account of what is happening on the Great Barrier Reef through reef facts because we believe that Queenslanders deserve the truth. We on this side of the House know that we can strike a balance between—

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask the minister to wrap up.

Mr POWELL:—sensible and safe port development and continued protection of our precious reef. I encourage everyone to visit www.reefacts.qld.gov.au. It contains great facts about the Great Barrier Reef in this great state that provides great opportunity.