



Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.19 pm): Yesterday I stood before the House and spoke about the facts—the reef facts about the Great Barrier Reef. Having this week launched the Reef Facts website, I can report to Queensland that Queenslanders, Australians and, in fact, the international community have jumped on the site to get the truth about the Great Barrier Reef. Queenslanders deserve the truth. They are hungry for it, and that is what this government is delivering. In just three days there have been more than 40,000 views of Reef Facts on the website, on Facebook and on Twitter. That is an extraordinary fact in itself.

The extreme greens may continue to trash the Great Barrier Reef because for them it is about putting campaign funds in the bank. For them it is not really about the reef at all; it is about their philosophical opposition to Queensland's resources industry. They may run their campaigns under the guise of being credible organisations, but let there be no doubt that that does not make them factual.

The only ones dumping on the reef are the green groups looking for headlines and for handouts. Reef Facts is necessary if we are to continue to provide employment and prosperity to the 1.1 million Queenslanders who live alongside the reef. Reef Facts outlines the facts around the recent Abbot Point decision. This decision compares and contrasts the positions of the current Newman LNP government and the Labor government that preceded it. Unlike Labor, this government does not support a multicargo facility at Abbot Point that would have resulted in 38 million cubic metres of dredge spoil having to be reclaimed. That is an unpalatable fact that the Labor Party must live with every time they decry the great work that this government is doing to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

The fact is that 32 per cent of the Great Barrier Reef coastline is classed as protected area and less than three per cent has been developed. Through our draft port strategy which clearly aims to limit development to four existing ports—let me stress that again; four existing ports—in the reef catchment, this government has demonstrated its intention to maintain that balance. Australia is an island and ports are the lifeblood of our economy. We can strike a balance between sensible and safe port development and continued protection of our precious reef. Under the Newman government, the reef is in good hands because we bank science ahead of politics and facts ahead of opinion and hysteria. That is a reef fact.