



Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 7 May 2014

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Achievements

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.45 pm): The Newman government is focused on helping to grow the Queensland economy while ensuring the state's environment is protected and maintained. My department of EHP has delivered a significant regulatory reform agenda which has streamlined its administrative processes, simplified the regulatory burden on business and industry and reduced prescriptive requirements. Our achievements over the last two years include completing environmental impact statements in 2013 for eight proposals which will support \$5 billion in capital expenditure and 6,000 jobs if they are developed as approved.

We have halved annual fees for small sewage treatment plants, benefiting caravan parks and small business operators such as bed and breakfasts in the Sunshine Coast hinterland. We have improved the efficiency and flexibility of environmental licensing, helping thousands of small business owners by reducing the number of environmentally relevant activities by 70 per cent—from 13,000 to 4,000 businesses—saving almost 10,000 businesses over \$6.5 million a year in annual fees. We have halved assessment times for the oil and gas industry around their environmental authority applications. Environmental impact assessments are underway for more than 30 major projects, which will potentially contribute up to \$18 billion in capital expenditure and create 15,000 jobs. We reduced the number of model conditions by nearly 50 per cent, again for the petroleum and gas industry.

We have also committed over \$48 million this financial year for conservation and sustainability activities to ensure that Queensland remains one of the most biologically diverse places on earth. Our most recent achievements include: the funding of 11 front-line koala rescue and rehabilitation organisations to help them expand their services as part of the \$26.5 million investment in the protect our koalas initiative; a new partnership with south-west Queensland local councils and organisations to reduce roadside litter as part of the litter and illegal dumping action plan; the launch of the heritage funding component under the Everyone's Environment grant scheme to provide \$600,000 to 34 groups and individuals working hard to manage, support and interpret heritage sites in Queensland; and we are working with private landowners to declare nine new nature refuges, adding close to a quarter of a million hectares to the nature refuge estate and bringing the total area protected under nature refuges to more than 3.89 million hectares of high-value conservation land.

Those opposite ignored real protection for the environment and instead focused on expanding environmental bureaucracy. In contrast we measure it in outcomes, striking a balance, helping to grow the economy through cutting burdensome green tape and making way for businesses to create jobs while protecting Queensland's environment.