



Speech By  
**Hon. Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Great Barrier Reef, Environmental Protection**

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.18 pm): I would like to update the House on just what the Newman government is doing to protect the environment, in particular the Great Barrier Reef. The Newman government understands the value of a strong plan and we have one. By having a sustainable management plan for the reef we are looking after it for all Queenslanders now and into the future. It is not uncommon to hear those opposite sprout mistruths. If it were not so serious it would be laughable. Yet again last night we heard a prime example from the member for Mackay. Unfortunately that comment was repeated on ABC radio this morning. It was: 'This government has not properly responded to the concerns of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority about how land management agreements will continue to protect land from environmental degradation and prevent run-off to the reef.' That is completely and utterly false. It is alarmist and simply not based on the facts. The facts—all the facts—are available on the government's Reef Facts website. Allow me to remind the House, and particularly those opposite.

The Newman government has a strong plan for the Great Barrier Reef to ensure a brighter future for it, not only for the more than one million people who live alongside it but also for those who visit. Its international tourism status underpins more than 67,000 jobs and delivers around \$6 billion a year to our economy. We all know the greatest threats to the reef are storms and cyclones, the crown-of-thorns starfish and coral bleaching. Whilst we cannot control the weather, we can invest \$35 million a year on reef water quality initiatives.

In addition to supporting water quality targets under the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, otherwise known as the reef plan, we continue to fund and support the sugarcane and the grazing industries to lead the development and implementation of best management practice programs. That not only will reduce green tape, because we all know that the best outcomes with farmers do not come from asking them to fill in countless reams of paperwork, but also will strengthen long-term agricultural productivity and profitability. Our \$8.9 million investment in reef water quality science projects directly relevant to farm extension give producers more information and tools to assess their current management against best practice and enable them to develop action plans for improvements on their properties.

Under the Newman government, the reef is in good hands. It is in much better hands than those of members opposite who, while they remain armchair critics, failed to get out of their ministerial seats and do what was needed to be done to protect the reef and ensure the Queensland economy would continue to thrive because of it.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** I take the interjection from the member for South Brisbane. What were they going to do at Abbot Point? Thirty-six million cubic tonnes of sediment was to be removed, which is more than four million tonnes per ALP member sitting opposite.

Under the Newman government, the economy will continue to grow as Queensland becomes the destination of choice for the resource and agricultural sectors and the reef becomes a destination of choice for tourists. Under the Newman government, strong appropriate regulation will see high environmental standards not only be achievable but also be met. Under the Newman government, basic state reporting will be open, transparent, on time and accurate, which is something that those opposite could never achieve; hence UNESCO's interest in the reef in the first place. This is the difference: on this side of the House, we have a plan, we take action, we get out of our armchairs and we ensure that Queensland has a strong plan for a brighter future