




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING (RED TAPE REDUCTION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (8.06 pm): I, too, rise to support the State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. This bill will assist the government to meet its target of reducing red tape by 20 per cent by 2018. It will repeal five acts and amend a number of others to improve existing processes and, contrary to views expressed by those opposite, it will do so without watering down environmental standards. Before the last election, the LNP committed to reset the imbalance created by the Wild Rivers Act, particularly on Cape York. Since then it is a matter of public record that those laws have been found to be invalid by the Federal Court. The Federal Court determination proves that those flawed laws were all about politics and not about protecting the environment.

Recently, this parliament passed the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014, which included a new framework for considering development in areas of regional interest, including strategic environmental areas or SEAs. Those areas are places of significant ecological value. Importantly, all—and I stress, all—of the areas that were formerly declared within the flawed Wild Rivers Act will be declared strategic environmental areas under the Regional Planning Interests Act, with one exception. As the Deputy Premier explained, that exception is an addition, not a reduction. It is the significant addition of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve. With its political approach to protecting the environment, rather than a scientific or rational planning approach, that is something the Labor Party could not achieve. The Regional Planning Interests Act will ensure that those iconic Queensland sites remain protected for future generations.

In complete contrast, the imposition of the Wild Rivers Act is yet again a perfect example of the way the former Labor government operated. It was hastily conceived and poorly structured, had little consultation and pretend concern for Indigenous and community groups, all the while cutting green preference deals behind closed doors in Brisbane.

The Newman government is instead protecting the most significant environmental areas under a considered planning framework which also takes into account the concerns of local communities. Planning decisions in strategic environmental areas will best consider how to protect environmental attributes through either a local government planning scheme or a regional interest development approval at the state level. By consolidating the legislation used to regulate regional land use, the new planning framework will reduce the regulatory complexity for development in local communities and maintain environmental values. Under the framework, dams and weirs in strategic environmental areas will require a regional interest development approval, so too will resource activities and broadacre cropping.

The repeal of the Wild Rivers Act in this bill represents a significant milestone for a great many stakeholders that have been involved in the wild rivers area since they were introduced by the Labor

government in 2005. I am pleased to finally move forward with a new framework that better manages regional land use with protection for these important areas of Queensland.

The bill also repeals the Gurulmundi Secure Landfill Agreement Act 1992 which is administered by my department, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. The repeal of this act is great news for a wide variety of stakeholder interest groups. Since 1992 this act has restricted the use of this site to hazardous waste disposal by the Brisbane City Council. The repeal of this piece of legislation will allow the site to be opened up for other uses, including resource recovery operations.

I am pleased to support a bill that makes sensible changes to a wide variety of legislation, restores the balance and provides a significant contribution to reducing red tape. It is clear that Labor has no plans and no policies to take our state forward. Only this government has a strong plan for a brighter future for all Queenslanders. I commend this bill to the House.