




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 6 August 2014

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Agriculture, Resources and Environment, Report

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (8.44 pm): Can I pick up where the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry left off and also add my thanks to the chair of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee and to the members who participated in this year's committee. The Newman government's third budget continues our commitment to protecting Queensland's environment and heritage places. It is a budget that delivers a strong plan for a brighter future for the environment while growing a four-pillar economy and job opportunities. Over the past two years we have delivered a significant number of conservation and sustainability programs, we have introduced important regulatory reforms to cut through red and green tape, and we have enhanced environmental management processes and continued to conserve Queensland's built heritage. This year, with a commitment of over \$78 million, almost half of EHP's total budget for the department's conservation programs, we will ensure that Queensland remains one of the most biodiverse places on earth.

The Newman government is delivering practical environmentalism. Unlike Labor, we are focused on delivering green outcomes, not green preferences. I would like to take this opportunity to correct the record and dispel some of the myths propagated by the part-time shadow environment minister, the same part-time shadow minister who claims the environment has been sidelined by this government. False! Had she been across her brief she would know that the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection has received more funding this year—\$8.4 million more funding to be precise—an increase in funding that demonstrates this government's full support for the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and the important role it plays in Queensland.

To be honest, amongst her negativity I found just one thing the member for South Brisbane and I can agree on, and that is the importance of the Great Barrier Reef. However, that is where the agreement stops. The member for South Brisbane incorrectly asserts that the Newman government has not directed any additional money to the Great Barrier Reef than former Labor governments. False! On top of maintaining the existing \$35 million commitment, the member is not taking into account a number of programs. Let me just mention two: the significant investment that comes through the \$12 million Everyone's Environment grants program that includes many projects that impact on the reef catchment or the reef itself; and the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership, something that the previous government could not do. To be frank, if the member truly sees the Great Barrier Reef as the greatest environmental issue, I would have thought she would have found the time to attend the estimates committee hearing. Some of her colleagues made it to multiple hearings, including the opposition leader. The member for South Brisbane will need to do better.

Ms TRAD: Point of order, Mr Deputy Chair.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Could you please address me as the deputy speaker.

Ms TRAD: Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, what is your point of order?

Ms TRAD: My point of order is that the minister is reflecting on a member's absence from a parliamentary committee. My understanding is that such references are not in keeping with the tradition and customs of the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is overruled. I call the minister.

Mr POWELL: Mr Deputy Speaker, many others were able to make it to more than one and I would suggest the member for South Brisbane needs to show some interest.

Ms TRAD: Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane?

Ms TRAD: The minister has made a reflection which is inconsistent with the standing orders and the customs and tradition of this House. I ask that you make a ruling on it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have made a ruling. Are you questioning my ruling?

Ms TRAD: What is your ruling?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I said you are overruled.

Ms TRAD: I am overruled?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am dismissing your objection. Are you questioning that ruling?

Ms TRAD: I am not questioning it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then please resume your seat. I call the minister?

Mr POWELL: Mr Deputy Speaker, if I can continue, the member for South Brisbane then had the audacity to criticise a modest advertising spend on our Reef Facts campaign. The spending on our advertising is significantly less than the former government. Frankly, I am gobsmacked by the hypocrisy of those members opposite. I will not be lectured about the appropriate use of resources by people who saw fit to spend a whopping \$2.8 million on advertising for costly green schemes when they were in government.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr POWELL: By contrast, this government is committed to being accountable to Queenslanders and I make no apologies for telling people the truth.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr POWELL: We have an obligation to inform people across Queensland and around the world—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Minister, please hold on for a second. There will be no more interjections.

Mr POWELL: Can we pause the clock, please, Mr Deputy Speaker?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, please continue. I am warning the member for South Brisbane: no more interjections.

Mr POWELL: We have an obligation to inform people across Queensland and around the world of our efforts to manage the reef and we will continue to do so. When it comes to the World Heritage Committee meeting that I was questioned about, I can assure the member for South Brisbane and others opposite that the money spent on my trip to Doha does not come close to the \$100,000 that the former minister for the environment, Kate Jones, and her two advisers racked up attending the unproductive Copenhagen climate talkfest in 2010. That is right: \$100,000 and two advisers.

In summary, the dissenting report from the member for South Brisbane is nothing more than the fanciful hysteria of a part-time opposition spokesperson. It is nothing more than the irritating background noise that you make when you have no policies of substance to talk about. This is further proof that Labor does not have anything positive to contribute for the future of this great state or for its environment. On the other hand, we have a strong plan for a brighter future for Queensland's environment and we are getting on with delivering it.