




Speech By
Hon. Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 15 October 2014

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Environment

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.20 pm): Unlike those opposite, the Newman LNP government does not believe environmental protection is measured in the pages of legislation, nor do we believe it should be used as an excuse to charge extra fees and dip into taxpayers' pockets. That is right: on top of the direct hits people were already taking under the former Labor government—such as hikes in transport fares, hikes in rego fees, hikes in power prices, hikes in water charges—those opposite ensured average Queenslanders were taking indirect hits through a range of environmental charges they imposed.

Motor mechanics and printing businesses were forced to pay extra fees to operate in the state of Queensland. But not happy with just charging businesses to operate safely, my predecessors also argued business needed to pay for their waste. They stood here and argued that every cafe, every construction site, every tradie needed to pay to dispose of their waste. That is Labor's way—create yet another tax, another cost, that is inevitably passed on to mums and dads across Queensland.

By contrast, the LNP government is cutting green tape while delivering strong environmental standards. We have scrapped the former government's ridiculous waste tax, saving businesses \$90 million every year. Let me repeat that: a \$90 million saving for Queensland businesses. By reducing the paperwork for 9,400 low-risk businesses throughout the state, we have delivered savings of around \$6.5 million in fees annually. Let us not forget the crown jewel of the green machine, Queensland's very own Office of Climate Change, costing Queensland taxpayers up to \$80 million each and every year. This office gave us gems like the 'low-carbon diet' initiative at the bargain price of \$1 million.

Rather than forcing taxpayers to foot the bill for millions of dollars in green schemes, the Newman government is implementing innovative programs that reduce costs, that reduce people's water bills, for example. We have delivered an Australian-first pilot program in partnership with Queensland Urban Utilities for managing nutrient emissions from a community sewage treatment plant at Beaudesert. This provided estimated potential savings of \$100 per annum for Beaudesert ratepayers.

The former government saw this portfolio as yet another revenue raiser. They slogged Queensland businesses with fees and tied them up in green tape. We are slashing fees, encouraging growth, delivering innovative solutions and saving families money. More importantly, we are focused on protecting our environment for the people of Queensland. Rather than charging business ridiculous fees, we are ensuring they are responsible. We have people out on the ground across Queensland carrying out more inspections than ever before. Unlike those opposite, we will continue to protect our environment and deliver real solutions for Queensland families and businesses.