



Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

Record of Proceedings, 2 March 2017

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Funding

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (9.56 am): Last night the member for Clayfield was desperately trying to make out he was the farmers' friend. He was desperately pandering to the right of his party and, of course, his red-headed leader sitting in the dining room watching. Today we learn that as treasurer he had no regard at all for rural communities. We know the member for Clayfield assessed his cruel cuts to environment programs according to a pain threshold. We still do not know how he determined his pain threshold, but today we have learned just how much pain they caused. Against advice, those opposite slashed environmental compliance, leaving our environment, and especially our rural communities, at risk. The member for Clayfield's Cabinet Budget Review Committee received a submission from his then environment minister, the member for Glass House, marked 'urgent and unavoidable'. It argued there was a need for an increase in compliance funding as industry expanded into prime agriculture land.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: One moment, Minister. Member for Glass House, if you want to write to me about the matter that you are talking about you are able to write to me. I would urge you to not try to simply disrupt the minister in his ministerial statement.

Dr MILES: National media reports tell us that the member for Glass House warned the opposition leader that—

A high level of attention and oversight was critical given the potential groundwater impacts, the impacts of contaminant release to underground waters, soil contamination, air quality (noise, dust, nuisance, and air emissions), vegetation disturbance as well as impacts to wildlife.

Faced with this advice from his environment minister, what did the opposition leader do? According to ABC reports, he slashed the budget for overseeing the CSG industry in half. The reports say the number of full-time staff, such as scientists to test groundwater, was cut by half. Compliance is important. It is important for communities who rely on the health of the land and water to provide for their families and to provide food for us all to eat. It is also important for industry. It is in the best long-term interests of industry for Queenslanders to have confidence in our environment department—confidence that they have the tools and resources to prevent pollution. By deciding that preventing pollution did not align with the priorities of his government, he put at risk the livelihoods of farmers and confidence in the entire environmental compliance system. Fortunately, the member for Clayfield can no longer inflict his pain on Queenslanders. Labor is rebuilding Queensland's environmental programs for the sake of our economy, our agricultural communities and, of course, our native wildlife.