




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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INNOVATION, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.56 pm): I rise to contribute to this discussion on *Examination of Auditor-General report No. 16: 2017-18—Follow-up of managing water quality in Great Barrier Reef catchments*. In the time I have allocated to me I want to focus on reading into *Hansard* and sharing with the parliament some of the successes achieved by the former LNP government when it came to implementing the recommendations of the Auditor-General, indeed in driving some of the recommendations of the Auditor-General. When the LNP came to government in 2012 there was no report card mechanism across the entire length of the Great Barrier Reef other than that that was put together overall of the Great Barrier Reef scope by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

When I was appointed minister for environment there were a lot of challenges in the Gladstone harbour and the solution that we settled on was to replicate our longstanding successful Healthy Waterways report card here in South-East Queensland in Gladstone harbour. Through a partnership of industry, government at all three tiers, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the Australian Institute of Marine Science and the community, including Indigenous representation, we were able to establish the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership, and it achieved exactly what the Auditor-General was looking for in terms of the fact that catchment monitoring needed to be expanded to aid in determining two things—firstly, the effectiveness of practice management change and, secondly, to enhance the confidence in modelled outcomes.

One of the challenges that many of the communities up and down the length of Queensland struggled with was having confidence in what was being shared with them in terms of the monitoring and the outcomes produced from the various reef projects. The Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership turned that on its head. For the first time the community was actively involved in understanding water quality and other scientific quality readings and interpreting them and presenting them to the broader community in a way that the broader community could understand.

On the back of that success we then launched the Mackay-Whitsunday report card. That built on the Mackay Whitsunday Water Quality Improvement Plan, and I understand that it is now called Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership. Again, that is a partnership between industry, including the agricultural industries, the mining industries, the ports, all levels of government, community representation and tourism. I understand that those report cards are now being utilised the length of the Great Barrier Reef. It was an initiative of the former LNP state government to implement those report cards. They have restored significant confidence, especially in the community, in understanding the scientific data that is produced.

I think there is a bit more work to be done. I listened to the contribution by the member for Gympie about understanding the effectiveness of practice management change. We know there is a lag, but I do not think that we are also measuring the right things. I also want to put on the record that the best management practice programs were implemented by the former LNP government. They were a huge success and far better than the stick approach that is being proposed by the current government.