

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 801

asked on Thursday, 31 October 2013

MR HOLSWICH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION (MR POWELL)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister give an update on the green tape reductions that have been undertaken by the government and the impacts they are having on Queensland business, including those in the Pine Rivers Electorate?

ANSWER:

The Greentape Reduction reforms have introduced a simpler and more flexible environmental licensing framework with a proportionate-to-risk licensing model and a self-assessment process for low-risk activities.

Overall, these reforms have made it easier and cheaper for business to obtain a range of environmental approvals in the Pine Rivers area.

For example, the reforms have removed the requirement for an environmental approval for some low risk activities that are not licensed in other states. This has resulted in the deletion of 20 environmentally relevant activity thresholds from Schedule 2 of the Environmental Protection Regulation 2008.

The new arrangements provide greater flexibility with up to 12,000 businesses across the State freed from the requirement to obtain an environmental approval. Streamlined approval processes for all environmental authorities mean faster assessment timeframes for applicants.

Businesses such as motor vehicle workshops, commercial printers, welders, steel workers and cabinet makers are among those to benefit from the reforms. It is estimated that in the Moreton Bay Regional Council area over 500 businesses are no longer required to hold an environmental authority, pay fees or fill in the required paperwork.

For some of those activities that remain regulated, eligibility criteria and standard conditions are being developed so that applicants know upfront the requirements of the licence. This ensures almost immediate approvals for low-risk businesses, consistency and greater certainty, while maintaining strong environmental outcomes.

In total, these changes deliver a suite of benefits including estimated savings to business and government of \$20 million through reduced administrative costs and removal or lowering of application and annual fees.

Also, fees for small sewage treatment plants have been halved, easing the financial pressure on caravan parks and bed and breakfast establishments.

Opportunities for further reform are being developed so as to maintain the momentum for reducing regulatory burden.

Work has already commenced on protected plants and waste management regulation. Other areas where there might be opportunities include coastal management and contaminated land.