



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Environment**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 24 June 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Tuesday, 24 June 2014  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Perrett, Graham, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr PERRETT** (Moreton) (15:55): I am proud to speak on this matter of public importance about the Minister for the Environment's abysmal record for defending the Australian environment. I know the member for Bass, who has just delivered a speech, is only going to be here for a short time but at least when he is looking for a job in two years time he will have the record for giving the worst environmental speech ever from a Tasmanian. He did not mention in his speech the fact that the budget ripped half a billion dollars away from Landcare programs. I thought he might mention that. He did not mention the environment minister's promises of \$600 million for solar roofs, solar towns and solar schools—a pre-election comment that was forgotten straight after the election. Only \$2.1 million remains for solar towns. The member for Bass did mention some scientific research. However, the budget saw environmental research cut by \$21.7 billion.

Government members interjecting—

**Mr PERRETT:** They can bray all they like over there. The reality is that I am quoting from their budget paper. I know, coming from Queensland, how important the environment is. I grew up at a time when Joh Bjelke-Petersen was the premier and was dedicated to doing sandmining on Fraser Island. It was the then Commonwealth government and a Liberal minister, in fact the now Premier Newman's father, who stepped up to defend Fraser Island. So I know the conservative side of politics does have some runs on the board for protecting the environment. Sadly, we saw in December 2009, when the member for Warringah became the leader, the polarisation on the environment when suddenly we saw the start of appeals to the selfishness that is inherent in some people. Rather than appealing for people to use their wallets and make a small change in their behaviour—putting out the lights, changing how things are done in factories and with transport—that will be to the benefit of the country, instead the Liberal Party has appealed to selfishness, to those lesser angels. It has been an incredibly effective campaign and some of them have swallowed it hook, line and sinker.

Sadly, it is the more moderate voices among those opposite who understand the economies of direct action—which, let's be honest, is an absolute dog of a policy. No economist in the world can support direct action. Why? Because it will not work. Because we have already put a price on carbon, emissions have dropped; it has changed behaviour. We do believe in scientists and we would actually have a science minister. We are not trying to shut down and sack scientists; we believe in the science. Those opposite are environmental vandals, sabotaging the future and our economy. Remember, by putting a price on emissions we will be better prepared to sell our services and our green products to the world.

Government members interjecting—

**Mr PERRETT:** Those opposite are braying unnecessarily, like in a scene from a Banjo Paterson poem. They have wrapped themselves around this husk of a policy but we know that the costs associated with direct action will be all but a waste of money. Their magic dirt policy will not create any reduction in emissions because all the good achievements have already been rolled out. Let's look at what has been happening. In Queensland, Jeff Seeney, the day after the election, suddenly said the Great Barrier Reef should be a smaller marine park. We have seen the incredibly shameful situation where the member for Flinders's feeble attempt to shrink the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area by 150,000 football fields was shown on the world stage to be sabotage.

**Mr Nikolic interjecting—**

**Mr PERRETT:** Obviously, we have some over there like the member for Bass, who has all the vision of the southern marsupial mole, lives in a burrow and does not really understand how things are going. (*Time expired*)