




Speech By
Hon. Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cape York Regional Plan

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.44 am): Our government has a strong plan for a brighter future, and nowhere is that more evident than on Cape York Peninsula. Before our election we said we would be a government that planned to deliver real economic opportunities for the people of Cape York as well as protecting the important environmental areas. Unlike Labor, we were not interested in doing grubby green deals under the emotively charged Wild Rivers Act to achieve preferences at each election—deals that took away the opportunity for cape communities to grow and prosper.

Unlike Labor, we have been determined to put in place a real regional planning process that will tackle the challenges on the cape and provide a future for the people who will live there. The regional planning process of the regional planning act will ensure that those who live in this unique region have the major say in planning decisions that affect their lives. We promised that the focus of the Cape York Regional Plan would be the people of Cape York, especially the Indigenous communities and the traditional owners who need genuine opportunities to responsibly develop their country. The Cape York Regional Plan will provide economic opportunities that will provide jobs and a better quality of life for the residents of Cape York. Just as we have done on the Darling Downs and in Central Queensland, we have worked with the people of the cape to establish their vision for their region and developed a land use plan to deliver that vision. We have engaged representatives of every local government on the cape—traditional owners and other key stakeholders through our Cape York Regional Planning Committee.

I chaired the fourth meeting of that committee last week, and I am proud to report that the final draft Cape York Regional Plan received unanimous support from all present. The community of Cape York has very clearly said to us that it wants to decide the most appropriate development of the region and we have listened. On the basis of their feedback, we plan to protect sensitive environmental areas and make other areas available to provide economic opportunities for cape residents, especially Indigenous communities. As a starting point, the Cape York Regional Plan will regulate areas that have been previously regulated by Labor's politically discredited and compromised Wild Rivers Act. We will also continue to protect and manage the extensive areas of national park on Cape York. We will add new areas at the request of local communities as they develop their long-term plans for their particular area.

At last week's meeting the regional planning committee approved new regional land use maps, and we committed to meet annually to consider any new proposals to regulate additional areas. Indigenous groups told us they did not want thousands of square kilometres of privately owned Indigenous land locked up at the whim of southern environmental activists, and we listened. They told us they wanted a regional plan that was defined by those who call Cape York home, and we listened.

They told us that they want a state government that supports economic self-determination for Indigenous communities, and we listened.

The new Cape York Regional Plan keeps options open for business and employment growth for a part of Queensland that desperately needs to broaden its economic base. This plan allows environmental and cultural sensitivities to be identified and respected within each council planning scheme and the regional planning approvals process. The Cape York Regional Plan is a strong plan that will provide a brighter future for Cape York communities and the generations of Indigenous people who will live there in the future.