




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (2.06 pm): My government will go above and beyond in its efforts to strike the right balance in protecting our greatest natural asset, our Great Barrier Reef, and supporting our critical export industries. On Friday evening Queensland time, the World Heritage Committee reached a positive draft decision on the reef. It not only does not recommend that the reef be added to the list of World Heritage sites considered to be in danger; it recognises the comprehensive policy commitments made by my government and the action that we have taken so far.

The final decision on this matter will be made at the World Heritage Committee meeting in Bonn later this month. The Deputy Premier and Queensland's first ever designated Minister for the Great Barrier Reef will travel to Bonn to hear firsthand the important decision of UNESCO in relation to our reef status. This is an indication of how seriously our government takes its responsibility to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

The draft decision of the World Heritage Committee praises our government's efforts, but it also comes with expectations that we will honour the very important commitments that we have made in relation to reef protection. In that regard, we will demonstrate to the world our immovable resolve to protect the reef this week.

Today, our government will introduce new legislation into this House to simultaneously boost economic development around Queensland's four regional priority ports and help protect the Great Barrier Reef. The Sustainable Ports Development Bill, an Australian first, will boost ongoing development at our key export ports of Townsville, Abbot Point, Gladstone and Hay Point, Mackay, striking the right balance to enhance our economy while protecting the reef. This is my government delivering its key election and Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan commitments to protect the reef by banning the sea based disposal of port related capital dredged material in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area and restricting port related capital dredging. At the same time, the bill supports economic development, investment and job creation by master planning these priority ports and their precincts.

The Queensland economy relies on our ports, particularly these four major bulk commodity ports, in and adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area. But there must be a balance between keeping our economy strong and doing everything that we can to ensure that the ports and the reef exist in harmony. Importantly, this bill enshrines public consultation in the port master planning into the future. We are the first Australian state to do this, allowing Queenslanders a say in the future sustainable development of major ports operating in and adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area.

This bill will prevent capital dredging for these priority ports in any areas of the Commonwealth or state marine parks; restrict capital dredging to the master planning areas; require master plans for all priority ports, supporting further local development and investment; and optimise efficient use of infrastructure at the four priority ports. Master planning will make the port precincts more attractive to potential developers and investors. The port master planning process allows consideration of marine and land based impacts, port and supply chain capacity and connectivity, and environmental and community values. Master planning also protects areas for future essential work that growing ports require such as corridors for roads, rail lines, gas and water pipelines and power lines. It helps make port precincts a more attractive development option by giving greater certainty to potential investors.

Our priority ports in Townsville, Abbot Point, Gladstone and Hay Point, Mackay represent trade worth \$32 billion and shifted 77 per cent of the total throughput of all Queensland ports in 2013-14. We are also honouring our election commitment to protect the Fitzroy Delta, Keppel Bay, North Curtis Island and Port Alma—Port Alma will not be included in the priority port of Gladstone.

The Sustainable Ports Development Bill 2015 is the next step in implementing the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. The bill delivers on our commitments on port development. There are a number of other pieces of legislation and mechanisms that the government will use to meet our other reef promises. This is my government delivering for our economy and delivering for our greatest natural asset, the Great Barrier Reef. It is my government finding the right balance between our economy and our environment.