




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (9.56 am): I am pleased to advise the House that this government has acted quickly to implement its election commitments on the Great Barrier Reef. One of our first actions in government was to secure federal government support to amend the draft Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan—the pre-eminent plan for the reef—to reflect the commitments we took to the election.

The plan is so substantially improved as a result of our government's commitments that the Prime Minister came to Queensland to launch it with me and Minister Hunt on 21 March. That is right; Labor's plan was so good that the Prime Minister came here to launch it with me. Had the plan remained the same—and that is what would have happened if the former government had been re-elected—the likelihood of the reef being listed as in danger by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee when it meets in June would have been far greater than it is today.

Today I can report further progress. I am pleased to inform the House that the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce has been established. This task force has been created, as we promised during the election, to provide advice to the government on meeting the ambitious water quality targets we have set for the sake of protecting the Great Barrier Reef.

The task force will harness a wealth of expertise, experience and knowledge across reef and water quality issues, land management practice and the different industries that operate within the reef catchment.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Glass House, I warn you under standing order 253A. If you persist I will proceed with what is possible under standing order 253A. I call the minister.

Dr MILES: I have asked Queensland's Chief Scientist, Geoff Garrett, to chair the task force, bringing his considerable experience and science networks to the position. The task force has been given the job of providing a set of practical recommendations about the best combination of measures to achieve our water quality targets, including the priorities for investing the additional \$100 million that the government has committed to over the next five years.

It is a big job and, on behalf of the Queensland government and those around the world who treasure the Great Barrier Reef, I thank Dr Garrett and the other eminent individuals who have accepted the invitation to join this task force and take on this challenge.

I can also announce that an Office of the Great Barrier Reef will be established within the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. Establishing a single office to oversee and coordinate implementation of our reef commitments across government will significantly bolster our

overall capacity and especially provide a far higher degree of accountability and transparency on our progress towards achieving our targets.

These announcements are further examples of how committed the Queensland government is to securing the future of the Great Barrier Reef and demonstrating to UNESCO and the world at large how seriously we take our role as custodians of this World Heritage treasure.