




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

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ADJOURNMENT

Youngcare; Australian Marine Conservation Society

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (6.56 pm): Let me firstly commend the member for Condamine for his contribution. Youngcare really is an incredible group and David Conry is an inspirational man.

Earlier today the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services spoke about an important anniversary, the five-year anniversary of Policelink. I rise to inform the House of another anniversary worthy of celebration. This year, the Australian Marine Conservation Society celebrates its 50th anniversary. For 50 years AMCS has been the voice of Australia's ocean wildlife. Members will most likely recognise the work of AMCS through its Fight for the Reef campaign. In partnership with WWF, AMCS campaigners and members have worked with energy and passion to educate the public about the risks faced by the Great Barrier Reef and the need for strong government action to protect it.

Mr Rickuss: Is that myths or risks?

Dr MILES: That is the risks. But honourable members may not know that AMCS members have been fighting to protect the reef since the 1960s. AMCS members successfully campaigned against a proposal to mine limestone on the Great Barrier Reef in the 1960s. They have also been central to public campaigns that saw the reef protected as a marine park in 1974, recognised for its outstanding universal value as a World Heritage area in 1982 and further enhanced through the establishment of green zones in 2004. These are achievements that span generations and their impact will be felt for generations to come.

We on this side of the House recognise the valuable role that environmental organisations and conservation groups play in our public and community life. It is worrying to see the way in which these groups are coming under attack. During the term of the previous government, we saw the use of gag clauses to try to stifle the voice of the non-government sector. Now, the federal government is trying to silence environmental groups. In a thinly veiled, cynical attempt to limit the ability of these groups to speak out on issues of public importance, the federal government has launched a parliamentary inquiry in an attempt to take away these groups' tax deductibility status.

The Palaszczuk government values the role and the voice of all of these environmental and civil society groups, which are such an important part of the fabric of our democracy. I will be joining AMCS members to celebrate their 50th anniversary tomorrow night. On behalf the Great Barrier Reef and all of the other marine habitats AMCS members have championed over years, I will toast AMCS as being the voice of Australia's ocean wildlife for many years to come.