




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2015

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Agriculture and Environment Committee, Report

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (7.50 pm): I thank the members of the Agriculture and Environment Committee and, in particular, the committee chair and member for Ipswich for their consideration of the budget estimates for my portfolios. I appreciated the opportunity to engage with members of the committee on the matters of key interest to their constituents and to start conversations that I look forward to continuing. I have not forgotten that the member for Hervey Bay has promised me a tour of the heritage listed Woody Island lighthouse in his electorate. I understand our officers are talking about potential dates, so I will be holding the member to that. The member for Mount Isa queried the effectiveness of government policies on managing flying fox roosts in urban areas and that is something I am looking forward to discussing further with him and the member for Dalrymple later this week. Shortly, I will be visiting the member for Logan to speak with his constituents about our work examining options for reducing plastic waste in Queensland.

Therefore, while there may well have been some other places we all wanted to be on that Friday evening, I felt the debate was constructive, respectful and ultimately useful. Personally, it was an honour to highlight how the Palaszczuk government is delivering for the environment, our national parks and the Great Barrier Reef in its first budget. In this budget, we have delivered \$100 million in new money that we pledged during the election campaign to improve the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef. Our work will include tracking the health of Gladstone, Mackay, Cairns and Townsville waterways and investing in scientific research, tools to help business transition to better environmental practices and funding buyback net fishing licences in Cairns, Mackay, Yeppoon and Rockhampton.

On climate change, we are providing \$15 million over the next three years to address and manage climate change and coastal hazards. That includes \$12 million to help councils address coastal hazards including sea level rise, inundation and erosion in their planning processes. That program will be delivered in partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland. Soon coastal councils will be able to apply for funding to assist with the development of local plans and options to deal with their escalating climate risks. We are also providing \$3 million for the development of a Climate Adaptation Strategy in collaboration with industry, local government and the community, to develop responses to the varying impacts of climate change across Queensland's regions and sectors.

The successful NatureAssist program will receive a boost of \$5 million to continue its work providing incentives for private landholders to undertake conservation management on their land and creating nature refuges for land of significant conservation value and climate change resilience. To ensure our natural places are managed to best preserve the unique natural and cultural values and enhance sustainable visitor access, we are also investing in greater joint management with traditional

owners and Indigenous ranger employment opportunities. This includes North Stradbroke Island, where we will invest \$12.4 million to support joint management with the traditional owners, the Quandamooka people, and to employ rangers and a joint management coordinator. We are also providing \$7.4 million over four years to jointly manage with traditional owners 2.6 million hectares of park estate on Cape York Peninsula as part of Indigenous management agreements and to employ a further seven Indigenous rangers. Also on Cape York, \$7.3 million over four years will go to providing for the continued employment of 15 Indigenous rangers to manage and maintain protected areas.

In my portfolio, we are committed to protecting the state's unique environment and heritage with initiatives that will improve the health of the Great Barrier Reef, reconnect landscapes through protected areas, preserve our rich history and protect wildlife. I am delighted, as I am sure is my colleague the member for Rockhampton, that the committee recommended that the proposed expenditure for the committee's areas of responsibility be agreed to without amendment. Again, I thank all the members of the committee for their contributions during the hearing. I acknowledge the hard work that has gone into their deliberations and the work of the parliamentary staff who support the committee. I also take this opportunity to thank my directors-general, John Black and Tamara O'Shea, and acknowledge the effort by a great many departmental staff, as well as the staff of my office, that went into preparing for the estimates process.