




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

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, 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) (2.39 pm): I rise to update the House on the government's financial investment in protecting the Great Barrier Reef and the 69,000 jobs that rely upon it. The amount of \$100 million over five years has been committed for water quality improvement initiatives. This is new money on top of the already substantial investment the Queensland government makes to activities that deliver outcomes for the reef. The government has also committed an additional \$6 million over four years to expand the Regional Report Cards program to include Cairns and Townsville. One of the first projects to receive funding under the water quality improvement investments is known as eReefs. Before departing for Bonn I was thrilled to announce that the Queensland government will invest an additional \$2 million over the next two years for phase 2 of this cutting-edge project which will deliver real time water quality results for the reef. This brings the government's commitment to \$3 million for phase 2 of this project.

The eReefs project will develop tools akin to those provided by the Bureau of Meteorology for weather. This means that in the future people will be able to see what is happening in relation to Great Barrier Reef water quality on their computer, tablet or phone in real-time. They will be able to see how clear the water is, what the temperature is and the effects of floods, storms and cyclones on the reef. You will be able to zoom in on your local river to see how much sediment, nutrients and pesticides are flowing into the reef. This will be a game-changer for reef managers by allowing us to better understand the changes we need to make on land to improve reef water quality.

This project is a collaboration which brings our funding together with investment from the Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, the Science Industry Endowment Fund, BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance and the Australian government. It is only with tools like eReefs that we can better target our investment and make a real difference to the health of the reef. This project is also a great example of governments working with the private sector and philanthropic organisations to leverage investment with a single purpose, better understanding the health of the reef so we can all take steps to better protect it. The Great Barrier Reef is a very special place. It deserves to be afforded the highest level of protection and care. These investments by the Queensland government reflect our commitment to delivering this.