




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) (9.52 am): I am delighted to update the House on our achievements and progress protecting the Great Barrier Reef. This government was elected with a mandate to protect the reef. Queenslanders know how lucky we are to be the custodians of one of the greatest natural wonders of the world. It is not just an international icon but a \$6 billion asset that supports almost 70,000 jobs. In our first year of government we have achieved a lot to protect the reef. We moved quickly to avoid an 'in danger' listing from UNESCO. We committed an additional \$100 million over five years. We legislated to ban at-sea dumping of port related capital dredge spoil in the reef World Heritage area and we have limited port expansion on the reef coast. Next, we have to reduce pollution from the land to the reef.

Establishing the Water Science Taskforce was one of my first priorities. The task force was established to provide government with advice on how we can best meet our water quality targets and the priority areas for investing the additional \$100 million that the Palaszczuk government has committed for water quality improvement initiatives. The task force consists of experts in science, industry, government and the community. I am pleased to update the House that Dr Garrett has presented me with the task force's interim report which sets out its initial recommendations. The interim report is a significant milestone in our plan for the reef.

From scientists to farmers, tourism operators to conservationists, the task force has been gathering insights on what management approaches have worked well and what have not, their views on investment priorities and how to best meet the water quality targets. The task force makes it very clear in its interim report that there is no single quick-fix solution. Rather, a mix of tools and approaches will be needed. The interim report is open for public consultation for one more week. Submissions are invited until 22 February. I encourage everyone with an interest in the future of the Great Barrier Reef to go to the Great Barrier Reef Living Wonder website, have a look at the interim report and share your feedback on the draft recommendations. The task force will hand down its final report to the government in May 2016 and I look forward to updating the House further in due course.