




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

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Great Barrier Reef; Climate Change

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.03 am): Our Great Barrier Reef is one of the greatest natural wonders of the world—a \$6 billion asset supporting almost 70,000 jobs.

**Mr Powell:** This is my speech.

**Dr MILES:** In fact, our iconic reef was showcased to the world by legendary filmmaker Sir David Attenborough during the climate summit in Paris. Sir David's groundbreaking new BBC series on the reef, which will air in Queensland this year, is a timely reminder of what is at stake owing to climate change. Climate change was not in the member's speech.

At a panel discussion in Paris, Sir David said that filming the series was only the second time that he had been to the reef—60 years after his first visit. He said—

*It made an impression on me that I will never ever forget ... to see the reef this extraordinary jewel like environment crowded with thousands of fish and animals ... it was incredible.*

Sir David also delivered an important message on the cost of climate change, saying that the cost of doing nothing was far greater than whatever it takes to save our coral reefs. Seventy per cent of all fish species are dependent on coral reefs at some at that stage in their lives. If we were to lose the coral reef, the biological and ecological disruption to life in the ocean would be catastrophic.

Sir David's series highlights the need for an all-in solution. We are doing our best domestically to improve water quality, to protect the reef and increase its resilience, but that will mean very little if we just go on to cook it with higher global temperatures. Unlike the previous government, which banned all mention of the term 'climate change'—and I say to the member for Glass House that that was not in his speech either—and dramatically cut any initiatives designed to tackle it, we accept the science and so does the rest of the world. From the outset at COP21 in Paris, the parties agreed on the science, with the final outcome being to limit global temperature rise to well below two degrees.

Queensland's communities, economy and ecosystems, just like the Great Barrier Reef, are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. But Sir David was not the only well-known person at COP21 talking about our reef. At the screening, he was joined by Sir Richard Branson and the famous marine biologist and explorer, Dr Sylvia Earle, who will be in Brisbane for the World Science Festival very soon. They all agreed that the health of the Great Barrier Reef was an important barometer for the world's marine systems. In front of that international audience Dr Earle hailed Australia's efforts to protect the Great Barrier Reef. She said that our actions are a model for the world, actions that others should emulate in terms of assessing an area under national jurisdiction.

It is important that the international community appreciates that, despite the low target set by the Commonwealth government, the Australian community and many Australian state governments support strong climate policy. The Paris Agreement has the potential to become a catalytic instrument for business innovation and technology development and we hope that it inspires more appropriate targets from our federal government. In the meantime, the Palaszczuk government is determined to capitalise on this global shift and ensure that the clean energy jobs of the future are created here in Queensland for our kids to enjoy.