




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

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (8.45 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to provide a reply to the House following the Agriculture and Environment Committee's estimates hearing on 22 July. I greatly appreciate the time and effort of the committee in its review of the budget for my portfolio areas of Environment and Heritage Protection and National Parks.

The budget allocation I received in 2015-16 in my portfolio areas allowed me to stop further cuts which were built into the forward estimates by the former treasurer, the member for Clayfield. This budget sees the Palaszczuk government begin to rebuild after three long years of LNP disregard for Queensland's environment. This budget will allow my department to address and regulate impacts of industry on the environment, to protect the Great Barrier Reef and to respond to climate change. In my portfolio it is climate change where the Newman-Nicholls government was most dangerous. With a budget allocation of \$6.8 million over four years we can begin to rebuild our capacity to manage this global threat. It is a shame that we have to start from scratch, but I am confident that we will once again become leaders in this area because a healthy and resilient environment is essential for maintaining the quality of life that we as Queenslanders are accustomed to.

This budget reaffirms the Palaszczuk government's commitment to managing and protecting the environment, with a \$23.5 million boost to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's operating budget. This will allow us to implement new programs for koala conservation, crocodile management, action on climate change, recycling programs such as a container deposit scheme and much, much more. It will also ensure the continuation of services that deliver on our environmental priorities such as protecting the Great Barrier Reef, enhancing Queensland's ecosystems, protecting our significant heritage places and safeguarding our environment from harm.

We continue to work with our Commonwealth partners to implement the Reef 2050 Plan and the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan on the ground in local communities. We also continue to engage with farmers on improving reef water quality by reducing sediment and nutrient run-off through better agricultural practices. The Palaszczuk government has accepted or accepted in principle all 10 of the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce's recommendations, and there is \$22 million in this budget to implement them. This will allow us to implement perhaps the most important recommendation of the task force: two new major integrated projects in the Burdekin and Wet Tropics catchments at a cost of \$33 million.

This budget also prioritises wildlife conservation. We know that our koala populations in the south-east have been struggling, so we have provided \$12.1 million to protect koalas and their habitat. We have delivered funding of \$5.8 million for crocodile management that will also safeguard the jobs of

10 staff based in regional Queensland. Plus, we will use \$2.7 million to research flying fox roosts and travel patterns.

The new Community Sustainability Action grants program will encourage community groups to be more active in their local areas. This \$12 million program aims to encourage innovation in environmental conservation activities and increase volunteer participation at a community level.

The state's national parks are also getting a budget boost. We have delivered up to 31 new park rangers over the next four years across Queensland for the ongoing management of our national parks. In addition, an implementation team of up to 10 officers will be recruited by 2020 to support the transition of national parks on Cape York Peninsula to jointly managed parks with traditional owners. The additional positions followed a recent expansion of the state's protected area estate and are supported by new funding of \$35.9 million over four years to establish and manage these areas.

This budget will ensure Queensland is in the best position to effectively manage our changing climate and ensure the long-term viability of our economy, communities and industries. I am pleased that the committee recommended that the proposed expenditure for the committee's areas of responsibility be agreed to without amendment. Again I thank all members of the committee for their contribution during the hearings, especially the member for Gladstone, who did an excellent job of chairing the committee. Finally, I thank my directors-general and acknowledge the efforts of the departmental staff as well as the staff in my office in preparation for estimates.