




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

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef, Water Quality

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (10.08 am): Soil loss from gully erosion is one of the biggest threats to the water quality of the Great Barrier Reef. That is why the Palaszczuk government has boosted the state's efforts to protect the reef, including by purchasing Springvale Station in Cape York. Areas of badly degraded grazing land on the 56,000 hectare property are responsible for 40 per cent of the sediment from gully erosion in the Normanby Basin, which is the cape's largest reef catchment. Run-off carries sediment onto the outer reef, where it blocks light, smothers marine life and reduces the growth of coral and seagrass. The Palaszczuk government is actively working to identify, implement and evaluate ways to reduce soil loss and improve the reef's resilience.

The Burdekin Water Quality Improvement Plan 2016 shows that gully erosion is the most significant source of fine sediment and that significant remediation of gullies within specific priority subcatchments will need to be undertaken to reach the Reef 2050 Plan target. The environment department's Reef Water Quality Science Program has provided financial support to NQ Dry Tropics to address sediment, nutrient and pesticide run-off in the Burdekin region.

The Fitzroy catchment is also a major contributor of soil loss from gully erosion. Taken together, the Fitzroy and Burdekin catchments are estimated to deliver at least 70 per cent to the modelled total suspended solids load reaching the reef lagoon from human activity. EHP has invested almost \$600,000 to address the erodible soils in the Fitzroy to identify the most vulnerable areas of soil loss to waterways.

These are just the first steps in ensuring a targeted approach to preventing gully erosion. We will also continue to support the grazing industry best management practice program and support continued science investment and extension to ensure sustainable management of sediment on grazing lands for productivity and reef water quality outcomes.