



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

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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) (10.10 am): The release of the United Nations World Heritage Centre's draft decision earlier this month endorsed the progress that has been made to protect the Great Barrier Reef on the Palaszczuk government's watch. The report included an assessment by the World Heritage Centre and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which are the advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee. The report states—

... there has undoubtedly been an unprecedented level of increased effort ...

The report goes on to say—

This effort is a marked departure from past practices and deserves full recognition.

Even the global community understands how bad the LNP government was for the Great Barrier Reef. In their draft decision, UNESCO singled out a range of initiatives from the Palaszczuk government.

Opposition members interjected.

Dr MILES: The truth hurts, Mr Speaker. Those opposite do not like to hear it, but it is there in the decision in black and white. Let me repeat exactly what the World Heritage Centre said—

This effort—

our effort—

is a marked departure from past practices—

a marked departure from your practices—

and deserves full recognition.

The member for Hinchinbrook certainly has not read the decision and may not have heard what the report said: 'This effort'—our effort—'is a marked departure from' your past practices, and our efforts 'deserve full recognition'. They did recognise our efforts. They singled out the Palaszczuk government's \$100 million extra investment over five years for reef water quality, and I am pleased to say that today's budget will double down on that effort.

There are many practices that put our reef under pressure, especially land management practices. In Queensland our government was elected with a mandate to address these threats, and we are doing that. We established the water science task force, we have agreed to implement their recommendations and we are rolling them out. We have banned capital dredging in all but four priority ports and, to top it off, we have banned the dumping of dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area. I was pleased that UNESCO has acknowledged our progress. So many people have supported our reef water quality efforts—none of those opposite—and this draft decision recognises what can be achieved when government, farmers, industries and ports work together.

Our combined efforts are crucial for the survival of the reef and the 69,000 jobs that it supports, but unfortunately UNESCO's report did not tick all the boxes. They said there was more need for reef regulations and to introduce land clearing reform, the two things consistently blocked and opposed by those opposite. The report makes it clear that we will not meet our water quality targets without those things.

It was the previous Newman government who dismantled reef and land clearing protections and who planned to dump dredge spoil on the reef. The Palaszczuk government has reversed some of that damage, but we cannot achieve our targets while those opposite continue to block sensible laws and refuse to stand up to the member for Hinchinbrook to introduce sensible laws. The indifference of the LNP to the reef and their readiness to sacrifice the long term for the short term brought the reef to the brink. It is time for the LNP to step up and support the reef or put its World Heritage status at risk again like they did last time.