



Speech By  
**David Crisafulli**


**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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**INNOVATION, TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.42 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the committee report on the Auditor-General's follow-up report. As the member for Jordan did, I acknowledge the progress that was made from the original audit. That is a great step in the right direction. It also highlights areas where we need to look into the future.

I am very passionate about making sure that when governments budget for 'something' they spend on that 'something' and they spend it in that financial year. In my time in local government I saw councils go to a community and ask for money but then not spend it in that year. That is something that leaves communities aggrieved. It is no different for our level of government. It is a bigger pool of money, but people still deserve to know that the money levied will be spent on the stated purpose. The Auditor-General's report states—

Over the 2015-16 and 2016-17 financial years, the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program actual expenditure was about \$12.8 million short of the planned investment. Annual investment reports provide examples of where total planned expenditure was not spent, but they do not acquit actual expenditure against planned investment for each program. This decreases transparency and accountability. It is important that any underspend is carefully and transparently managed and acquitted to ensure confidence in the management of public funds. It would also demonstrate that necessary actions to improve water quality are undertaken on a timely basis.

They are wise words that we should heed. It is vital that the minister is able to hold her department to account—that what is allocated at budget time is required to be delivered on the ground.

The member for Noosa spoke about the gap between the BMPs, particularly that percentage. The percentage she mentioned is indeed low. I would be interested to know what percentage of growers who may not have signed on for BMPs are meeting those BMP targets. By looking at these numbers we may be able to come up with a formula—I do not want to pre-empt debate of a bill before the House—that can deliver us the environmental outcomes we need by working with farmers and having a clear incentive to reach firm, definitive targets and holding them to account—

**Dr Rowan** interjected.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** As the good member for Moggill says, through incentivising rather than always legislating.

If my analysis of the data is correct, I suggest that the percentage the Queensland government is spending on ensuring BMPs work is less than one per cent of the cost of that program. I suggest that if we are serious about reef protection and good environmental outcomes we may be able to do more through working with industry and backing it up with finances.

I mention the way we monitor reef run-off and water quality. I am not convinced that, in an era of such incredible technology, we are monitoring things in the most timely fashion and using the best equipment. While the Auditor-General's report did not delve into that—of course it should not have—

we as a House should consider it. If we are serious about water quality, we need that data—not retrospectively and not months down the track, followed by a recrimination process about how it came to be. In this day and age we are able to get that data in real time. By working with the catchment authorities, landholders and professionals in that space such as environmental groups and by using effective technology, which I do not believe is overly expensive in the modern era, we can get data in real time. Data in real time enables you to act and legislate in the correct manner to ensure future reports give us a clean bill of health for a magnificent asset for this state.