




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GREAT BARRIER REEF PROTECTION MEASURES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (4.00 pm): Queenslanders have plenty to be proud of: our World Heritage listed rainforests, our world famous beaches and our beautiful sand islands. In fact, from the Torres Strait and the Wet Tropics to Springbrook National Park in the Gondwana rainforests, Queenslanders are custodians of some of the world's most amazing lands and waters. The biggest treasure of all is undoubtedly our Great Barrier Reef, both big in size and big in the place that it holds in our hearts. Queenslanders have the great honour of being the guardians of this natural wonder—an honour they take very seriously. I certainly do. Protecting the reef motivated me to run for office in 2015. Even now in my new portfolio, people from all different backgrounds raise the reef with me. They want to know that we are doing all we can to protect it.

The Palaszczuk government has made that commitment to protect the reef to Queenslanders and to the global community. It was my great honour to lead that work last term. I commend the member for Algeester on her work, including bringing this bill for the parliament's consideration. Our job to protect the reef is made all the more difficult in a warming climate that sees rising sea temperatures, acidification of the oceans and more cyclones, heatwaves and extreme weather events. In this new environment, we must do everything we can to give the reef a fighting chance. Legislating minimum standards for the pollution that ends up suffocating and poisoning the coral and sea life is one of those measures.

Most of our farmers are doing the right thing. I have met and worked with many of them. These producers take very seriously their stewardship of the land. They work hard to reduce pollution. They are innovating ways to cut their fertiliser use and run-off using different products, practices and new technologies. They are proud of this work. Their hard work, though, is undermined by the few who refuse to change. These laws are about creating minimum standards, about rewarding and recognising those who are doing the right thing for the reef and about lifting standards across industry. Right now, the actions of producers who refuse to change, continue to pollute and undermine the efforts of most farmers are not even illegal. Their run-off is flowing into the Great Barrier Reef, causing huge plumes of pesticides, nutrients and sediment pollution and suffocating the coral, killing the sea life. Right now, they are not even breaking the law.

These protection measures are just one part of our efforts to protect this great natural wonder and the 60,000 jobs it supports. They are for the Queenslanders who want a Great Barrier Reef to show their children and their children's children and visitors from every corner of the world. Those opposite will pay a heavy price for opposing these reef protection measures, because most Queenslanders say, 'How could you oppose protecting the Great Barrier Reef?' I commend the bill to the House.