




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Reef Assist

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (9.57 am): Yesterday the Premier announced that the Palaszczuk government is injecting \$10 million into the economy to deliver jobs and priority environmental projects in Great Barrier Reef catchments. As part of our plan for economic recovery, the Reef Assist package will provide environmental benefits and create up to 200 jobs in Northern Queensland.

While our state continues to be affected by the global impact of COVID-19, our government recognises that environmental projects are a great way to support employment and protect our unique biodiversity. This is a great initiative for regional communities and a positive sign that our state is on the road to recovery. Local organisations are being invited to identify shovel-ready projects that will deliver real benefits for the regions. This is about investing in a jobs-rich conservation and land management program that will also leave enduring benefits for communities, businesses and, of course, the environment. I was pleased to see that yesterday's announcement was warmly welcomed by stakeholders. Shelly McArdle from Queensland Water and Land Carers said—

After all that has happened with flood, drought, fire and now COVID, this gives our community a welcome lifeline. This sort of hands-on positive work is exactly what we need, to improve community wellbeing.

Shani Tager from the Australian Marine Conservation Society said—

This is exactly the sort of program that's needed to rebuild regional economies, create jobs and address one of the major threats to our Reef by improving water quality. Boosting programs that create jobs, clean up our waterways and manage our land to make sure that the water that flows into our beautiful Reef is clean, is a win-win.

The Great Barrier Reef contributes \$6 billion to the Australian economy and supports more than 60,000 jobs, and right now our tourism industry is relying on its health more than ever. The Reef Assist program is a tremendous investment for the people of Queensland and for the Great Barrier Reef.