




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, Environmental Protection

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.10 am): The Palaszczuk government is investing \$989 million in this year's budget to protect our environment and support jobs in regional Queensland. We are committed to enriching the lives of Queenslanders through healthy natural environments and investing in world-class scientific research.

As part of our economic recovery plan, \$8.9 million is being invested in our National Parks Works and Jobs Boost to deliver infrastructure upgrades in multiple parks and forests across Queensland and to support jobs in the regions. A further \$10.9 million will support the Revitalising National Parks program to deliver quality visitor infrastructure and to create regional job opportunities.

Conserving Queensland's protected areas and biodiversity is at the heart of our government's vision. Queensland's Protected Area Strategy 2020-2030 will protect our world-class natural and cultural values. It includes a \$28 million investment over four years to expand the public protected area estate by acquiring and managing high conservation value land. That investment is commencing this financial year. The strategy will also strengthen our partnerships with First Nation peoples with the expansion of the highly successful Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program, increasing ranger numbers to 200.

The Palaszczuk government is also committed to protecting our natural wonders while boosting Queensland's tourism industry by supporting more than 200 jobs with a \$40 million investment to protect the Great Barrier Reef. This includes the \$10 million Reef Assist program, which will deliver 11 environmental projects in partnership with local government, natural resource management organisations and First Nation peoples, and provide support for regional economies as part of our economic recovery plan. The first new jobs have already been created, with the program expected to generate around 130 regional jobs for Queenslanders in the Wet Tropics, Burdekin, and Mackay-Whitsunday Great Barrier Reef catchment areas. Our work to improve reef water quality, and support communities and industry to reduce threats to marine wildlife, will receive a further \$27.1 million investment this financial year, because we know that a healthy reef is important to Queensland's economic recovery.

The Palaszczuk government also recognises the importance of investing in Queensland's scientific excellence with \$5.5 million over four years to expand our air quality monitoring and management system. This is a crucial source of information for governments and the community during extreme weather events like bushfires. The Palaszczuk government remains committed to boosting our economy and driving economic growth as we protect our natural environment and support the jobs that rely on it.