



Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles


MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2020

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GREAT BARRIER REEF PROTECTION MEASURES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT ACT, PROCLAMATION

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

Disallowance of Statutory Instruments (Cognate Debate)

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (6.04 pm): I rise to oppose the disallowance motion moved by the member for Broadwater.

Queenslanders have the great privilege of being the guardians of one of the greatest natural wonders of the world: the Great Barrier Reef. It is a role we take very seriously. If you ask any Queenslander whether they think the reef should be protected from pollution, invariably they think it should be. That is what this government has done. When we came to government the Great Barrier Reef was on the verge of being removed from UNESCO's World Heritage list. The Newman government had no interest in enforcing any standards that would help the reef survive. By not setting minimum standards you do not just let the few pollute the reef with no consequences; you also tell the many—the majority, in fact—that their efforts to do the right thing and protect the reef do not matter. Why work so hard to prevent fertiliser and sediment run-off from your farm if your neighbour can just go ahead and ruin that good work? Preventing pollution is crucial. Clean water and resilient coral are the only things that will give the reef a fighting chance against the challenges of climate change.

I have seen our reef after a coral bleaching event. The only thing worse than the site of ghostly white coral is hearing the stories of tourism operators losing their livelihoods. Reef tourism contributes more than \$6 billion to the economy. The Great Barrier Reef supports over 60,000 jobs. These jobs are overwhelmingly in regional Queensland. It is essential that Queensland emerge from the current public health crisis with the confidence that its major tourism drawcard and business generator, the Great Barrier Reef, is in good condition.

Every Queenslander should have the same opportunity to show their children the Great Barrier Reef that I have had. When it is safe to do so we will welcome our friends from other states back to see it too. Queenslanders know the value of the Great Barrier Reef. Australians know the value of the reef. The international community knows its value. If the member for Broadwater could stop thinking about his own job for a moment and focus on the jobs of Queenslanders he might realise why the Great Barrier Reef is worth protecting too.