



Speech By  
**Hon. Meaghan Scanlon**

**MEMBER FOR GAVEN**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2021


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL**

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#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill**

#### **Health and Environment Committee, Report**

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (4.58 pm): It was interesting hearing the member for Bonney speak about talk versus action on climate change given those opposite do not even have an emissions reduction target. They have members of their own political party who refer to renewable energy as a fantasy. It is a bit rich coming from the opposition given their appalling track record at both the federal level and the state level when it comes to action on climate change and even acknowledging the science of climate change in this state.

Can I first thank the chair of the committee, the member for Thuringowa, all of the committee members and all of the staff in the Department of Environment and Science for their hard work and assistance in pulling together the budget given the very difficult year we all experienced in 2020. Protecting our environment is a key platform under our budget and a key part of our economic recovery because we know many of the initiatives that we fund not only protect the environment but create jobs as well. This budget allocates \$989 million to protect our environment and is spread over a range of initiatives.

First, I turn to the Protected Area Strategy, which I note the opposition member also referred to. We have allocated \$60 million as part of our initial investment to grow our protected area estate. The breakdown is: \$28 million for extending the public protected area estate; \$8 million to continue the Nature Refuge Program; and \$24 million to expand the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program. That is a key aspect of this proposal, because it is one thing to grow our protected area estate but we actually need people to be able to manage that protected area estate. That is what we on this side of the House are doing: growing the amount of rangers that we have. That is in stark contrast to those opposite, who oversaw a 33 per cent reduction in staff in the former environment department. They also oversaw a reduction in the number of positions of rangers on the ground. We need people to be able to manage this land if we are going to increase it. That is a key part of our platform.

We have also significantly invested in the Great Barrier Reef. We know the huge economic potential of the reef in terms of its impact on the tourism industry. It generates \$6 billion annually and thousands of jobs in the Far North Queensland region particularly. This is why we are investing to address not only climate change but also water quality. We know that that is one of the greatest impacts to the Great Barrier Reef, and we are doing that through a range of initiatives.

We have also announced our \$500 million flagship land restoration program—a program announced by this government that I have not heard the opposition commit to. Again, it is interesting that those opposite are criticising a project that they themselves have not committed to. I am very pleased, though, that \$93 million of that has already been delivered across 19 projects to help build carbon-farming industries across Queensland. This is creating revenue streams for landholders while sequestering carbon. It is a great initiative for a state like Queensland that has such a large land mass. We have so much potential to reduce those emissions.

We have also allocated substantial money to our National Parks Works and Jobs Boost Program to upgrade a number of the facilities within our national parks. I had a meeting today with the member for Springwood. Around his area we have an investment in the Daisy Hill Koala Centre. In my electorate there is investment in the Nerang National Park. There are also the initiatives to put in place renewable energy measures at Mon Repos and walking tracks on Magnetic Island. There is a range of investment across the state in our national parks. I was particularly interested to see in the LNP statement of reservation some comments which were positive. I am a bit confused in terms of the LNP's position on the reef, particularly in terms of water quality. They said—

The Great Barrier Reef is now listed as critical and we will back any practical action to protect this unparalleled natural asset and help it adapt and become more resilient.

Yet last week Senator McDonald said that we should scrap our reef regulations. Some LNP members say that they support measures on the Great Barrier Reef and other LNP members say that they do not support them.

I am very proud to be the minister of this portfolio. I know that it is incredibly important to my generation. I think it is great that youth affairs is also encompassed within this portfolio. It means that we are able to engage with young people around their future. That is why we are delivering a climate action plan: to set out what will happen over the next 10 years. The opposition member is right: we do have an emissions reduction target of 30 per cent. We will make sure that we meet it.