



Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Great Barrier Reef

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.11 am): Queensland is the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. With it supporting \$6 billion to our economy and 60,000 jobs annually, it is a key driver of the Palaszczuk government's plan for economic recovery. It is why the Premier last week announced the \$7.5 million Work in Paradise package, to encourage thousands of young workers across Australia to take a tourism job in regional hubs like Cairns. It is why since 2015 the Palaszczuk government has invested around \$400 million to protect our reef and create jobs. We know that protecting this World Heritage listed treasure supports our tourism industry, jobs and economic recovery for our regions.

Last week I had the pleasure of hosting the first ever ministerial environmental round table in Far North Queensland, on the doorstep of the Great Barrier Reef. There I met with environment groups, business and industry to look at ways we can continue to protect our environment and create jobs, building on the almost \$1 billion investment just this year and building on initiatives such as our new reef vessel that I had the pleasure of launching recently with the member for Gladstone. The new, jointly funded \$9.7 million vessel will act as a floating ranger station, enabling rangers to reach remote locations on the reef. This 24-metre vessel will increase compliance, surveying and research capabilities on the reef to help in the management of protected species and respond to incidents in the region.

I am pleased to advise the House that the Palaszczuk government will now look to build a new barge to join that vessel in protecting our reef and in creating jobs. The new 19-metre catamaran will be a long-range patrol barge designed to load, carry and unload a small excavator, vehicle and up to six tonnes of cargo. Construction will start very soon and be completed by the 2022-23 financial year to play a big role in the ongoing preservation and promotion of the reef.

Alongside this initiative is the \$270 million Reef Water Quality Program, which is supporting jobs in our regions through programs like Reef Assist. We are also working with groups like Greening Australia on projects including the innovative gully project to prevent 8,500 tonnes of fine sediment from reaching the reef every year. Of course, there is our target of net zero emissions by 2050 to make sure our reef can continue to thrive for generations to come. The Palaszczuk government backs the reef, backs jobs and backs Queensland by delivering our state's economic recovery plan.