




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, Environment

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.02 am): Queensland's environment is a major cornerstone of the Palaszczuk government's latest budget, with a record \$1.4 billion investment to protect the country's immense biodiversity and create jobs. This year's record investment will see a significant focus on the ongoing protection of the reef, measures to reduce landfill, land regeneration and conservation while creating jobs as part of the state's COVID-19 economic recovery plan.

We know that to protect the environment we must drive down emissions and create the jobs of the future, which is what this budget does. This investment in the environment, together with record investment in this budget for renewable energy, will help Queensland meet its emission reduction targets. The budget confirms another \$270 million for our Great Barrier Reef to build on the \$400 million already invested by the Palaszczuk government since 2015. The reef funding will go towards programs aimed at improving the water quality of this World Heritage listed area, and the \$6 billion economy and 60,000 jobs that rely on it.

The budget invests more in the Land Restoration Fund, with a further \$60 million to be made available for investment by the program which partners with farmers and other landholders for land restoration and carbon farming. That injection for the Land Restoration Fund also includes seed funding to co-invest in even more projects with businesses and farmers through the new Queensland Natural Capital Fund. To support our job creation and tourism industry, we will also invest an additional \$8.6 million in our national parks for better infrastructure, visitor experiences and to employ more First Nations rangers.

A further quarter of a billion dollars from the Department of Environment and Science will be aimed squarely at waste. We have banned a swathe of single-use plastics, seen more than four billion containers recycled through our popular Containers for Change program, and now we are setting our sights on capturing and recycling waste through resource recovery before it gets to landfill.

As part of the government's commitment to conserve wildlife in the Sunshine State, \$6 million will be provided over four years to bolster the South-East Queensland wildlife hospital network, with a further \$1.5 million per annum ongoing. I am also proud to announce that we have locked in \$3.7 million for the next four years and more than \$900,000 per annum ongoing to support koala conservation projects.

This budget also focuses on building Queensland's scientific capacity, with a further \$7.7 million over three years for research into disaster management, water quality modelling and sediment management. Our scientific and health experts helped keep Queenslanders safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing us to kickstart an economic recovery focused on jobs. We are backing them with close to \$8 million in additional funding to support the 300-plus scientists who work tirelessly in the pursuit of scientific excellence.

We will also continue our commitment to built heritage in Queensland with increased funding of \$5.5 million over two years for works at Newstead House. We went to the election with a plan for economic recovery and a strong platform to protect our environment and create jobs—and we are backing Queenslanders by delivering a strong budget that will protect our reef, regenerate land and create more jobs in more industries.