




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Budget, Environment

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.05 am): Last week I travelled to Far North Queensland, home to the oldest ongoing living culture, the oldest rainforest and the largest coral reef in the world. During my visit one thing was clear: just how connected the local community is to the reef and to our environment. Mr Speaker, you know as well as anyone else that this is a community which is deeply committed to action on climate change, and that is what we are doing to support that community.

I visited the Barron Gorge Hydroelectric Power Station to see how Australia's first publicly owned renewable energy company is driving down emissions, supporting local jobs and creating cheaper energy prices. I announced climate action grants to help community groups and not-for-profit organisations reduce their emissions and their power bills at the same time. I visited businesses like Cardzilla, where an ecoBiz partnership with CCIQ is helping small and medium businesses to do the same. I also visited Parramatta State School, which is part of our Advancing Clean Energy Schools program that has allowed them to install solar panels. It is one of 800 schools across Queensland. Our \$2 billion renewable energy fund is supporting significant projects like the Kaban wind farm, which will form part of the Northern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone.

I am proud to be a part of the Palaszczuk government, which is protecting the reef, its \$6 billion economy and the 60,000 jobs it supports. It is an investment that is not only helping to support more jobs in regional Queensland but also helping to address the biggest threat to the reef: climate change. With the World Heritage Committee set to make an important decision on our reef in just a few months, there has never been a more important time to show that we take that threat seriously.

Unfortunately, we have not seen nearly enough from the federal government on what it will do to address climate change. Scott Morrison has, once again, gone missing in action. He did not even mention the words 'climate change' when he visited Far North Queensland last week. In the federal budget tonight, will we see any investment or reform to make electric vehicles more affordable, or will we hear unhelpful remarks again that they will somehow destroy the weekend?

Will we see a commitment to renewables? We have been asking for months for the federal government to, at the very least, match our \$2 billion renewable energy fund. They collect the overwhelming majority of taxation revenue in this country. Queenslanders, especially those in Far North Queensland, will be watching to see if this decade-long government will finally come to the table and match our investment. Will Scott Morrison and his government turn their backs on them, like they have done time and time again—like they did when they vetoed funding for the Kaban wind farm, like they did when they refused to set a 2030 renewable energy target and like they did when they tried to repeal legislation for the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. This is a \$10 billion Labor government legacy which Angus Taylor now spruiks as somehow their action on climate. For the future of the reef, I hope that they come to their senses but I will not hold my breath.