




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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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) (10.04 am): Last night Australia received the reactive monitoring mission report into the Great Barrier Reef. This report clearly spells out how the inaction of the previous Morrison LNP government placed the reef under even further threat by refusing to take climate change seriously. I twice had the opportunity to meet with the two scientists who prepared the report while they were in Queensland, and I acknowledge the work that has gone into preparing it and making recommendations.

We have said from day one that we understand there are significant threats to the reef and that governments at all levels need to take action to protect it. It was only because this government was elected and took meaningful action that the reef was kept off the in-danger list in 2015. We took a package of measures—no thanks to those opposite—to the World Heritage Committee that spelled out the action we would take. We banned the dumping of dredge spoil on the reef and we introduced strong tree-clearing laws and reef regulations to address land-based sources of water pollution—both measures opposed by those opposite—and we continue that work throughout our time in government. In fact, since this government was elected we have taken decisive action on the two biggest threats to the reef: climate change and water pollution. We have set a net zero emissions target, developing decarbonisation plans to reduce emissions across all sectors of the economy.

Last month we announced the most ambitious action to date on climate change, with a \$62 billion Energy and Jobs Plan that will generate cleaner, cheaper energy right on the reef's doorstep. It will transition our coal-fired power stations to clean energy hubs and reduce emissions in the energy sector by 90 per cent by 2035. This is incredibly significant, given that energy is our highest emitting sector in Queensland. We will invest \$500 million to deliver more large-scale and community batteries, building on other actions like our Advancing Clean Energy Schools program, which has seen 200,000 solar panels installed at 900 schools, and our \$55 million Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy. In last year's budget we also committed \$270 million to continue the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program and address water pollution, and I can announce today that we are doubling our compliance team. We are scaling up land restoration, supporting farmers to improve run-off, banning more single-use plastics and driving sustainability with our \$1.1 billion Recycling and Jobs Fund.

Most importantly, a lot has changed since this report was written. We have had a change of government in Canberra. This government is working with Queensland and finally acting on climate change—not saying that electric vehicles will ruin the weekend, not vetoing renewable energy projects, not letting fringe views and extremists dictate critical economic and environmental policy. It is a government we can rely on to work with us to protect the reef. Queenslanders know better than anyone the value of the Great Barrier Reef, and they want to see governments protect not only this incredible environment but also the economy that relies on this reef. The Queensland and the Australian

governments agree that it is not appropriate or necessary to inscribe the reef on the List of World Heritage in Danger at this time, but I can tell Queenslanders that we will continue to build on our actions and work together to protect the reef and the communities and jobs that rely on it.