




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) (10.03 am): The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest reef system with thousands of reefs and more than 600 types of coral. It is critical that we protect it. Last week, I announced that we are doubling our Reef Assist program to \$20 million. This forms part of a \$75 million package to restore gullies, stream banks and wetlands across all six of the reef catchments. The Reef Assist program is not just tackling water pollution but also supports good jobs in regional Queensland. In fact, in the first round we saw more than 230 jobs created.

One of those successful proposals was from Jaragun Ecoservices, which will now receive \$862,000 to restore wetlands in the Russell River catchment area. Earlier this year I had the pleasure of visiting Jaragun's Dennis, Liz and the team and saw firsthand their mentorship and expertise being passed on to the next generation of particularly First Nations participants. I look forward to seeing their latest project, alongside the six others funded in this latest round.

As I said yesterday, Queenslanders can be assured that we will continue to build on our reef conservation actions. That is why today I am announcing that more than \$125 million of our reef water quality funding will be used to support the agricultural industry to deliver on-ground practice change and support best-practice management programs and extension projects that help landowners make their farms more sustainable and reduce water pollution. Farmers have an important role to play in looking after the reef. I have had the pleasure of meeting landholders across the state who are leading the way.

The reef report that has been handed down highlights the importance of addressing water pollution. This focussed funding builds on our \$500 million Land Restoration Fund, reef regulations and the announcement yesterday that we will double our compliance team to stop nutrients from ending up in the reef. I am also pleased to announce that, as part of our reef package, we will be allocating \$14 million for a new technology and innovation fund. Queensland is known for its innovation and we want to utilise that to accelerate on-ground conservation works. We will also be allocating \$8 million to support threatened species recovery in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, adding to the \$14 million in threatened species funding allocated in our most recent budget.

The reef report is clear: while we have taken big steps, we need to put the pedal to the metal and be rapid in our action. These new programs will be another weapon in our arsenal to protect the reef and what it means for Queenslanders.