

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 347**  
**Asked on Wednesday, 12 March 2008**

QUESTION:

**MR WETTENHALL** asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) — Will the Minister inform the House of measures being taken by the Government to monitor and improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon including any collaborative efforts with the Australian Government?

ANSWER:

The Great Barrier Reef is an international environmental treasure. It contributes \$6 billion a year and 63,000 jobs to the State. It is under threat from nutrient, sediment and pesticides pollution from farming and grazing and to some extent from urban sources. Global warming presents a further danger to the Reef.

In 2003 the Queensland and Australian Governments committed to reversing the decline in water quality entering the Reef by 2013 under the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. State agencies deliver specific Reef Plan actions, particularly aiming to improve land management practices in cane, grazing and horticulture industries in the Reef catchment. Queensland now looks forward to cooperating with the Australian Government to deliver its \$200 million Reef Rescue Plan - the first significant Australian Government funding specifically dedicated to support Reef Plan outcomes.

Through the Natural Heritage Trust, Queensland contributed over \$27 million in-kind to improving natural resource management in the Reef catchment in 2006/07 for planning, resource assessment, capacity building and on-ground actions. In 2006/07 Queensland spent \$6.3 million in cash in the Reef catchment through the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality for water quality actions such as protection and rehabilitation of waterways, improvements to native vegetation and land and water use.

Through the Reef Water Quality Partnership, the Australian and Queensland Governments cooperate with regional natural resource management bodies in Reef catchments to identify water environmental values, to develop water quality objectives, targets and management actions, and to monitor and report across the Reef catchment. They are supported by a Scientific Advisory Panel and Regional Implementation Group.

Queensland's Vegetation Management Act halts broadscale native tree clearing and associated erosion and land degradation, major contributors to declining water quality. The State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy offers extended leases to land managers who achieve desirable levels of land condition, which improves the quality of run-off water. Queensland's Reef catchments loads monitoring program is one of the world's most extensive water quality monitoring programs, using complex equipment installed at 30 stations over 1,500 kilometres of coastline. Queensland also supports community water

monitoring programs with specialist support for aquatic ecology, hydrology and soil chemistry, in addition to remote sensing and data capture and storage capabilities. Queensland's comprehensive land condition assessment program QScape analyses the effect of changes in land use, land management and climate on land, water and ecosystem health.

Queensland is collaborating with the Australian Government and other stakeholders to develop a Reef Water Quality Report to report publicly on water quality in Reef catchments, catchment health, land management practices and inshore ecosystems across the entire Reef catchment. The Australian Government has allocated \$22 million to Reef water quality monitoring and reporting under its Reef Rescue Plan.

Queensland also collaborates with Australian Government monitoring led by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority such as the Great Barrier Reef Annual Marine Monitoring Program. This involves monitoring river sediment, nutrient and pesticide loads, intertidal seagrass condition and mud crab bioaccumulation of toxins.