

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2146

asked on Thursday, 10 November 2016

MS FARMER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline the achievements of the Palaszczuk Government so far this term, in our commitment to protecting the Great Barrier Reef?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is delivering its commitments to protect the Great Barrier Reef, including through the implementation of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (Reef 2050 Plan) and the Government's response to the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce recommendations.

Our track record on implementing the Reef 2050 Plan has been outlined in the recently prepared Update on Progress that was transmitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre on 1 December 2016. Queensland has completed 11 of 56 Reef 2050 Plan actions it is tasked with, while 40 are underway and 'on track'.

Achievements have included:

- Enacting the *Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015* to deliver key port-related commitments including a ban on the at-sea disposal of capital dredge material and restrictions on new port development including no dumping of dredge spoil from the Abbot Point Port expansion in the Caley Valley Wetlands. A new ports master planning process has also commenced.
- Developing a Maintenance Dredging Strategy to guide how and when maintenance dredging can be undertaken to ensure the Reef's health and resilience.
- Establishing three new net-free fishing zones, including investing \$10 million to purchase net fishing licences to manage displaced fishing effort.
- Commencing implementation of the recommendations of the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce on how best to invest \$90 million in new Reef water quality funding to meet the Government's ambitious water quality targets.

Water quality

The \$90 million of investment in water quality is on top of the ongoing commitment of \$35 million annually for Reef water quality initiatives. Implementation of the Government's response to the Water Science Taskforce recommendations is now underway. New programs include:

- commencing the Major Integrated Projects to pilot sediment and nutrient reduction approaches;
- establishing an innovation fund to support implementation of new technology such as cost effective water quality monitoring sensors;

- holding the first science synthesis workshop for Reef water quality;
- refining the water quality targets for each of the 35 Reef river basins; and
- using a mix of tools including extension and new regulations to achieve improved farm management practices.

In June 2016, the Government announced its \$7 million purchase of Springvale Station near Cooktown, the source of 40 percent of the gully sediment loads in the Cape York region. The Queensland and Australian Governments have announced a \$45 million Gully and Streambank Joint Program to reduce sediment. This includes funding for:

- a partnership to trial innovative gully remediation techniques funded through the Great Barrier Reef Innovation Fund (\$2 million each);
- a northern Reef recovery project focused on remediation in Cape York, delivered through a partnership between the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and the Queensland Government (\$3 million each);
- \$5 million for gully and streambank management and remediation as part of the major integrated projects in the Bowen-Bogie-Broken catchments; and
- \$1 million through the Queensland Government Reef Water Quality Science Program for sediment management projects in the Fitzroy and Burdekin catchments from 2015-2019.

The Government continues to engage in and support regional waterway health partnerships producing regional Reef report cards. This includes commencing the Wet Tropics Healthy Waterways Partnership which has released its pilot report card, and initiating negotiations for a Townsville based partnership.

Fisheries and marine park management

The Queensland Government has established a Vessel Monitoring System in the East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery zone to reduce the ecological impact of fishing activities. The program has proven to be successful, with major declines in trawling offences since the implementation of the approach was initiated.

Public consultation on the fisheries management reform green paper has also occurred to guide the management of Queensland's fisheries into the future and submissions are now being considered.

The Queensland Government has also committed an additional \$1.65 million over four years to address the shortfall in funding for the Joint Field Management Program for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park which has not been increased since 2008, and has welcomed the in-principle agreement of Australian Government to match the funding increase subject to costings by the Commonwealth.

Climate change

The Queensland Government is committed to tackling climate change by moving to a low carbon, clean energy future that is essential for protecting the Great Barrier Reef. Climate change is a major factor in the severity of the coral bleaching event in 2016. The Queensland Government has committed to a 50 percent renewable energy target in Queensland by 2030 and is providing \$12 million over three years for the QCoast2100

program with the Local Government Association of Queensland including \$3 million to develop the Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy and an additional investment of \$6.8 million over four years to lead the development of the Government's climate change strategies including the development of the Queensland Climate Transition Strategy.