

Question on Notice
No. 563
Asked on 16 June 2020

Mr S Andrew asked Premier and Minister for Trade (Hon. A Palaszczuk)—

QUESTION:

Will the Premier provide reassurance to the community of Mirani and indeed Queensland as to whether the Government's plan is to roll back restrictive legislation concerning vegetation management and the water quality improvement plan 2050 to combat Queensland's struggling economy after COVID-19?

ANSWER:

Guided by scientific advice, my Government is protecting the iconic World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef which supports 60,000 jobs and injects more than \$6 billion of income annually into the national economy.

The joint Queensland and Australian Governments' Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan guides how industry, government and the community will work together to reduce nutrient and sediment run-off into Reef catchment areas and improve Reef water quality. It is based on rigorous scientific advice and supported by a robust monitoring and evaluation program.

We know that the scientific view is shared by most farmers and graziers in the Great Barrier Reef catchments who want to do the right thing. Since 2012, the Queensland Government has invested more than \$110 million to help farmers to improve farming practices and, consequently, water quality in the Great Barrier Reef. On-farm trials have shown that these improved practices at least maintain or improve productivity and profitability for sugarcane farmers, while also improving water quality.

We are also supporting the agricultural industry through the COVID-19 crisis with measures that include: deploying Agriculture Coordination Officers to support producers, the agriculture industry and local governments; extending the timeframe to lodge drought assistance applications; allocating \$14.7 million in 2020–21 to keep irrigation water prices low; providing \$12.5 million to support digital transformation in the agribusiness and food industry, reinvigorate trade relationships and help agribusiness diversify; and investing an additional \$5 million for wild dog cluster fencing in Western Queensland. This is on top of \$1 billion in funding for the Government's programs of 12-month interest free loans for COVID-19-affected businesses, which include agribusinesses and farms.

Accordingly, my Government would seek to reassure the electorate of Mirani and the whole of Queensland, that targeted and effective responses to COVID-19 have been, and will continue to be, delivered in support of Queenslanders and the Queensland economy.