



**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**  
Minister for the Environment

**The Hon Tony Burke MP**  
Minister for Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

J O I N T M E D I A R E L E A S E  
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## **\$200m to rescue the Great Barrier Reef**

Threats to the Great Barrier Reef, including the effects of climate change and declining water quality will be tackled by the Rudd Labor Government's \$200 million reef rescue plan announced in today's Budget.

Environment Minister Peter Garrett and Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister Tony Burke said the funding will support land management grants to farmers and community groups and fund vital research.

The rescue plan will help protect one of the world's great natural wonders, while benefiting local conservation and Indigenous groups, agricultural production and tourism, fishing and aquaculture industries.

It is a key component of the \$2.2 billion *Caring for our Country* initiative, to restore the health of Australia's environment and build on improved land management practices.

As outlined in Labor's election commitment, the \$200.0 million five-year reef rescue plan includes:

- \$146.0 million for a *Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Grants Program* – the majority of these funds to be provided in the form of matching grants to landowners and managers who commit to implementing proven practices to reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment run-off from the land;
- \$12.0 million for a *Healthy Reef Partnerships Program* to boost partnerships between the Government, state agencies and non-government organisations that support landowners with local expertise and extension staff;
- \$10.0 million for a *Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Research and Development Program* – a competitive research funding program to look at the link between land management practices and environmental impacts and develop new water-quality monitoring techniques for nutrients, chemicals and sediments;
- \$22.0 million for a *Water Quality Monitoring and Reporting Program* to expand existing monitoring and reporting of water quality in the Reef and fund a coordinated catchment-wide water quality monitoring program; and
- \$10.0 million for the *Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Program*, including at least \$5.0 million to employ Sea Country Officers in Indigenous communities and provide additional funding for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to strengthen partnerships with Indigenous communities.

“The Great Barrier Reef is the world's most extensive coral reef system with habitats that are critically important for the diversity of our marine biology,” Mr Garrett said.

“The reef continues to face the twin threats of coral bleaching, caused by climate change, and declining water quality.

“An important part of the reef rescue package will be building partnerships with Indigenous communities.”

Mr Burke said the sugar cane, cattle and banana industries had made significant advances in recent years to improve yields while reducing fertiliser and other inputs and their effects off-farm.

“This reef rescue package will accelerate uptake of improved farm practices to ensure these vibrant primary industries can continue, while improving the quality of water flowing into the reef,” Mr Burke said.

The Australian Government will work closely with stakeholders, including governments, farmers and the community to implement the five-year program.

Funds will be focussed on achieving clear, measurable outcomes in terms of improving water quality in the reef and achieving best value-for-money for taxpayers over the long-term.