



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Australian Minister for the Environment,
Heritage and the Arts

The Hon Tony Burke MP

Australian Minister for Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

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BARRIER REEF'S RESCUE RAMPED UP

The Great Barrier Reef will benefit from an additional \$7.5 million in funding through the Australian Government's *Caring for our Country* initiative, Environment Minister Peter Garrett and Agriculture Minister Tony Burke said today.

"The \$7.5 million in funding we're announcing today is on top of the \$23 million we announced last month for Reef Rescue, and will provide a further boost to efforts to protect the health of the Reef particularly as it battles the impacts of a changing climate," Mr Garrett said in Cairns today.

Mr Garret said up to \$4.5 million would go towards monitoring water quality in rivers and wetlands, monitoring and encouraging improvements in land management and land condition throughout the catchment, and looking at marine water quality and ecosystem health.

"A further \$2 million will go to trialling new technologies that improve water quality in the catchment and for developing and applying new water quality monitoring techniques for nutrients, chemicals and sediments," Mr Garrett said.

"Partnerships with traditional owners will see up to \$1 million over this financial year go towards improving sea country management, helping to conserve such species as turtle and dugong," Mr Garrett said.

Minister Burke said the Rudd Labor Government was working to improve the quality of water flowing into the Reef lagoon which is critical to the its capacity to resist coral bleaching.

"Farmers are already leading the way in sustainable land management across Australia and this funding will help to continue that good work," Mr Burke said.

"Works to be funded in the reef catchment range from improving nutrient and chemical application on farms, using controlled traffic farming and machinery conversions, fencing off waterways, and improving management and community understanding of habitats on the coast and in the waters of the reef lagoon."

"We've asked the regional Natural Resource Management groups, in partnership with agricultural industry groups and the World Wildlife Fund in the Reef catchment, to come up with projects for the current financial year based on an indicative budget for their region. We'll be considering these projects in the next month."

The funding will benefit the Mackay Whitsunday region, Terrain region, Burdekin Dry Tropics region, Fitzroy Basin region, Burnett region and Cape York region.

“Other Rudd Government projects funded in the reef catchment through Caring for our Country include catchment improvement works on farms and their associated catchment areas,” Mr Burke said.

“These works will see land managers from all areas including primary producers from the sugar, grazing, horticulture and dairy sectors working with industry groups, regional natural resource management groups and conservation organisations to improve water quality flowing into the reef.

“They range from improving grazing management on farms through enhancing wetlands functionality and improving waterway health, to raising community understanding and use of coastal fish habitats and other coastal environmental assets.”

The Rudd Government has earmarked \$200 million for Reef Rescue, out of the \$2.25 billion it has committed over five years for Caring for our Country.

For more information visit www.nrm.gov.au