



The Coalition's Policy

Key Commitments

The World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef is Australia's most treasured natural asset. It is our intergenerational responsibility to protect and improve the Reef.

Every year, millions of Australians and international visitors come to see the Great Barrier Reef. The Reef supports nearly 70,000 full time jobs and is worth more than \$5 billion a year to the Australian economy through the tourism industry alone.

After six years of Labor mismanagement, the Great Barrier Reef was on the World Heritage Committee's watch list to be 'in-danger,' with five massive dredge disposal projects in the marine park planned.

The Coalition took unprecedented action to fix Labor's mess.

We ended all five dredge disposal plans.

We banned all future capital dredge disposal projects in the Great Barrier Reef marine park.

We developed a comprehensive *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan* setting out our strategy to manage, protect and improve the Reef for future generations.

As a result of the Coalition's actions, the World Heritage Committee rejected the push from some to have the Reef listed 'in-danger,' removed Australia from the 'in-danger' watch list, and praised Australia as a global role model for reef management.

The Coalition has a comprehensive set of policies to invest in, and protect, the Reef.

We invest in the Great Barrier Reef based on the best available scientific advice. We have already invested \$461 million in reef funding as part of a broader \$2 billion ten year plan by Australian governments focussed on water quality, reducing run off and eradicating crown-of-thorns starfish.

In addition to the existing \$2 billion plan, the Coalition will create a new and profoundly important \$1 billion Reef Fund focussed on the great task of improving Reef water quality.

The Reef Fund will mobilise investment finance to tackle the two biggest threats facing the Great Barrier Reef: climate change and improving water quality. The Reef Fund will complement our existing suite of comprehensive Reef and environmental policies.

The Reef Fund will provide up to \$1 billion in finance over 10 years for clean energy projects that help tackle these two key threats.

The Reef Fund will be managed by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) and provide finance to projects located in the Great Barrier Reef catchment region.

Projects supported by the Reef Fund will deliver clean energy outcomes and have positive co-benefits to the Reef by addressing climate change, improving water quality, or both.

Our Plan to Invest in Our Great Barrier Reef

Australia's World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef is Australia's most treasured natural asset.

The Reef is the largest living structure on the planet and is one of its most complex natural ecosystems. It is rightly valued by the Australian and international community as a place of intrinsic beauty and incredible biodiversity.

Every year millions of Australian and international visitors come to see the Great Barrier Reef. The Reef supports nearly 70,000 full time jobs and is worth more than \$5 billion a year to the Australian economy through the tourism industry alone.

Protecting the Great Barrier Reef is an environmental and economic imperative.

The two biggest challenges facing the Reef are the need to improve water quality and the impacts of climate change. The Coalition has an integrated suite of policies tackling both these issues.

The Coalition will continue to do more than any prior government to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

1. Undoing the legacy of Labor's mismanagement of the Reef

When the Coalition came to office in 2013, the previous Labor Government left the Reef facing critical threats.

Under Labor's watch, the World Heritage Committee had put the Great Barrier Reef on the watch list to be listed as 'in danger.'

Under Labor, there were plans for five massive dredge disposal projects in the Great Barrier Reef's waters.

The Coalition took unprecedented action to address these issues.

We ended all five plans for disposing capital dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

We then locked this in by banning the 100-year practice of capital dredge disposal in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

We developed and put in place our *Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan*.

The Reef 2050 Plan responds to the World Heritage Committee's recommendation that Australia develop a long-term strategy for sustainable development to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Reef.

The Reef 2050 Plan is informed by both the world-leading Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014 and the comprehensive Strategic Assessment of the region — the most complex and comprehensive analysis of environmental management arrangements ever undertaken in Australia.

A key principle of the Reef 2050 Plan is developing Reef resilience in the face of a variable and changing climate. It seeks to achieve a more resilient Reef through actions under seven themes — ecosystem health, biodiversity, heritage, water quality, community benefits, economic benefits and governance. A more resilient, healthy Reef is better equipped to deal with stresses, such as climate change, the recent coral bleaching, and cyclones.

The decisive actions by the Coalition resulted in the World Heritage Committee declaring that the Reef would not be listed ‘in danger.’

The World Heritage Committee unanimously supported Australia’s long-term vision and plan for protecting the reef, declaring Australia to be a global model for reef management.

2. The largest ever suite of investments in the Reef

The Coalition is investing more than any prior government in the health of the Great Barrier Reef, amounting to a \$461 million funding injection since coming to office.

Protecting the Reef is a priority for all environmental programmes in the Reef catchment. The Coalition’s suite of investments work together to target all dimensions of the challenge of protecting the Reef, including:

- \$210 million through the Reef Trust to improve water quality and threats such as crown-of-thorns starfish
- \$101 million to support implementation of the Reef 2050 Plan through the National Landcare Programme
- around \$150 million of investments under the Emissions Reduction Fund in projects in the Reef catchment that reduce emissions and tackle water quality
- nearly 40 projects rolled out and planned under the Green Army with a focus on the Reef

In addition, the Coalition is upholding and advancing Australia’s reputation as a leader in reef science and innovation, through a \$32 million investment in the Tropical Water Quality Hub under the National Environmental Science Programme, based in Cairns’ Reef and Rainforest Research Centre. We have also invested \$80,000 through the University of Queensland to better understand the recent coral bleaching outbreak.

3. Establishing a new \$1 billion Reef Fund

The Coalition will build on its comprehensive suite of investments to protect the Reef.

We will create an innovative new \$1 billion Reef Fund.

The Reef Fund will tackle the two biggest threats facing the Great Barrier Reef – climate change and the need to improve water quality – and complement our existing reef and climate policies.

The Reef Fund will provide up to \$1 billion over 10 years in investment finance for clean energy projects that tackle these two key threats facing the Great Barrier Reef.

The Reef Fund will be managed by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC).

The Reef Fund will provide finance – both debt and equity – to projects located in the Great Barrier Reef catchment region.

Projects will deliver clean energy outcomes and have positive co-benefits to the Reef in terms of addressing the causes of climate change, improving water quality, or both.

Example projects under the Reef Fund

A key way to improve the resilience of the Reef to climate change, bleaching events or outbreaks of crown-of-thorns starfish is to improve water quality.

Leading threats to water quality include run-off of water, nutrients, fertiliser and sediments into the Great Barrier Reef, as well as ocean outfalls.

The Reef Fund will improve water quality by supporting clean energy projects in the Great Barrier Reef catchment region that address these issues. Example projects could include:

- installing more energy and water efficient irrigation systems on agricultural land. This could include variable speed drives, drip and micro sprinkler systems, irrigation scheduling equipment and soil moisture monitoring tools.
- more energy efficient pesticide sprayers and fertiliser application systems; or fertilisation systems coupled with renewable energy such as solar panels. These can lower the amount of pesticide and fertilisers applied, and hence reduce runoff.
- installation of new generation waste water treatment processes, more efficient pumps and biogas electricity generation to improve water quality while also reducing energy consumption. Cleaning up coastal sewage treatment plants is a fundamental step towards improving water quality in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The Reef Fund will complement the Reef Trust by providing a deployment pathway for technologies and techniques trialled under the Reef Trust's projects.

The Reef Fund will also tackle climate change directly, which is the leading threat to the Great Barrier Reef and reefs around the world.

The Reef Fund will do this by supporting clean energy projects in the Great Barrier Reef catchment region that reduce emissions.

Example projects could include:

- solar panels to substitute for diesel on a farm
- more energy efficient equipment and vehicles in the agriculture, local government, and tourism sectors
- large-scale renewable energy projects such as solar farms in regional Queensland

The \$1 billion Reef Fund is another example of practical action the Coalition is taking to protect the Reef. It will complement our Emissions Reduction Fund, which is already providing \$150 million for projects that tackle both climate change and water quality in the Reef.

Administration

The Reef Fund will be managed by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and will operate under its current legislative and governance framework, including its ability to provide a range of innovative, flexible and concessional financial products.

The CEFC's existing skills, experience, investment products and relationships with the finance community will be brought to bear in establishing and operating the Reef Fund. The CEFC currently jointly manages the Coalition's new \$1 billion Clean Energy Innovation Fund with the Australian Renewable Energy Agency.

In addition to supporting the Great Barrier Reef, the Reef Fund will provide significant economic benefits to Queensland. Through mobilising public and private finance, the Reef Fund will increase investment and employment, help lower energy and other input costs, and boost farm profitability.

The new \$1 billion Reef Fund builds on the projected investment of more than \$2 billion from Australian governments to protect the Great Barrier Reef over the next decade.

4. New investments under Phase 4 of our Reef Trust

Finding new ways to protect the Great Barrier Reef is a priority for the Coalition. Our new \$1 billion Reef Fund is our next step, and builds on our commitment at the 2013 election to create a new Reef Trust.

The Coalition delivered on this commitment by establishing the Reef Trust in 2014, with an initial \$40 million investment.

The Coalition has progressively built the Reef Trust up to \$210 million.

The Reef Trust focuses on improving water quality, restoring coastal ecosystem health, controlling the current outbreak of crown-of-thorns starfish, and protecting threatened and migratory species, particularly dugongs and turtles.

Reef Trust investments are based on the best available science. Investments are considered by the Reef 2050 Plan Independent Expert Panel, chaired by Australia's immediate past Chief Scientist, and have been developed in consultation with key experts and scientists.

The first three investment phases under the Reef Trust are underway.

The Coalition will build on the success of Phases 1, 2 and 3 by implementing the following four investments under Phase 4:

\$15 million to reduce nitrogen application in priority regions

This project will engage farmers in the Wet Tropics and Burdekin natural resource management regions to improve their nitrogen fertiliser and farm management practices to reduce nutrient losses into the Reef lagoon.

The voluntary project will provide flexibility for farmers to determine their own nitrogen use efficiency targets and cost-effective means of achieving those targets. A market-based competitive tender, delivered via multiple rounds, will be used to allocate funding to maximise value for money and outcomes for the Reef.

\$5 million to trial enhanced efficiency fertilisers

This investment will support the broader trialling of enhanced efficiency fertilisers as a strategy to reduce the loss of nitrogen to the Reef.

\$20 million to tackle sediment run-off from stream banks and gullies

This project will address one of the highest threats to the Great Barrier Reef, nutrient and sediment run-off from gully and stream bank erosion, focusing on priority areas, and stream

bank erosion including in minor streams and drainage lines, large river channels and high-energy streams in wet coastal catchments.

\$6 million to tackle crown-of-thorns starfish

Crown-of-thorns starfish can have a devastating impact on the Reef, but the Coalition has been able to halt their spread through targeted management. Around 400,000 crown-of-thorns starfish have been killed through our current operation whereby divers inject the starfish with a saline solution.

We have recently announced that a \$6 million investment will be provided by the Coalition for an additional control vessel to tackle crown-of-thorns starfish on the Great Barrier Reef.

The \$6 million boost will help protect 21 reefs of high tourism and conservation value and identify additional ecologically-important reefs to ensure that coral cover is maintained above critical levels on these reefs.

5. Additional targeted investments

In addition to investments under the Reef Trust and Reef Fund to tackle water quality and climate change, the Coalition will make the following targeted investments to support the Reef.

A new Southern Reef Ranger to tackle crown-of-thorns and patrol the Reef

In 2015 the Coalition launched the new Reef Ranger to patrol the reef and assist with crown-of-thorns eradication, jointly funded with Queensland.

The Coalition will invest \$6 million for a new 'Southern Reef Ranger.' The vessel will provide a third platform for crown-of-thorns starfish eradication and will ensure better policing of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park including against illegal fishing.

It will have capacity for long range missions by park rangers, improved safety and an all-round better platform from which to conduct important operations, including scientific research.

The Southern Reef Ranger would be based and focus on the mid-to-southern areas of the Reef. The Commonwealth will acquire the new vessel.

Operating costs will be shared with the Queensland Government.

Boost to science

The Coalition has made significant commitments to science in the Reef, including a \$32 million investment in the Tropical Water Quality Hub under the National Environmental Science Programme.

The Coalition will invest \$400,000 for emerging science and community partnerships through the Independent Expert Panel of scientists and the Regional Advisory Committees supporting the Reef Trust.

This builds on our \$8 million investment announced in 2015 for a Great Barrier Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Programme to streamline and improve the standard of scientific reporting along the Reef.

Tackling marine debris

Plastic waste impacts water quality and marine life of the Reef. More than half of the world's sea turtles have ingested plastic or other human rubbish, and ghost nets – discarded fishing nets and lines – kill marine life as they float through the Reef.

The Coalition is taking practical action to reduce marine and ocean plastic debris. We are, for example, working on a voluntary ban on micro-beads, ahead of a national ban by 30 June 2018.

Under our Policy to Support Local Parks and Environments, a re-elected Coalition will provide \$1 million in funding to support groups that build environmental awareness and help reduce littering that can become marine debris, including to Tangaroa Blue, Clean Up Australia, Keep Australia Beautiful and Banksia Foundation.

6. Effective financial and community partnerships deliver results for the Reef

Protecting the Reef requires a commitment from all levels of government, business and the community.

The Coalition knows that, by building effective and innovative partnerships, we can together deliver the best outcomes for the Reef. Our policies are designed to unlock the potential for action and build on the significant energy and work already being undertaken to protect the Reef throughout the community.

We will continue to actively work with all stakeholders to protect the Reef, including government agencies, local communities, farmers, the tourism and agriculture industries, fishing operators, the scientific and academic community and environment groups.

Partnerships under the Reef Trust

Through our Reef Trust, we are building partnerships to conserve the outstanding universal value and rich biodiversity of the Great Barrier Reef. Through working with industry, financial institutions, community organisations, the corporate and philanthropic sectors, and individuals, the Reef Trust is able to support and deliver projects and unlock ideas on how to better protect the Reef.

For example, the Reef Trust recently announced a partnership with Greening Australia and Virgin Australia to tackle soil erosion in the Reef catchment's hundreds of gullies to improve water quality in the Reef.

Greening Australia's public appeal aims to raise \$10 million over the next three years for the first stage of the estimated \$100 million major restoration project. Through our Reef Trust, we will match private contributions under this important initiative, dollar for dollar, up to \$2 million.

Innovative conservation financing

Our Reef Trust is also designed to explore alternative funding mechanisms outside traditional methods (such as grants). Our work with experts from the philanthropic and investment sectors to develop further options for the use of conservation financing products has attracted international attention.

We have established a Reef Trust Innovative Financial Mechanisms Panel comprising government, the finance industry and philanthropists. This forum for experts will discuss a range of conservation financing mechanisms which could be piloted for the Great Barrier Reef, such as green bonds, impact investment and private equity investments which are new to the environment sector in Australia.

World class marine park management

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is the lead Government agency charged with protecting the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the World Heritage Area.

The Authority is responding effectively to the many challenges it faces, including increasing visitor numbers, crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks, cyclones and coral bleaching.

The Authority is developing a sustainable and managed tourism plan for the Whitsundays which balances the interests of all those who want to enjoy the Reef whilst protecting the environment.

Green Army: Local people, local Reef projects

The Green Army involves local people delivering local environment projects. We have made projects that support the Reef a priority.

Already, 28 projects have already been rolled out targeting areas in the Reef Catchment to improve the water quality, biodiversity, health and resilience of the Reef, with another 11 projects commencing in the coming months.

Indigenous rangers

Indigenous rangers are critical to ensuring the health and sustainability of our environment.

The Coalition is already supporting training for twenty Indigenous rangers in Far North Queensland under the Reef Trust's Specialised Indigenous Ranger Programme.

Specialised Indigenous rangers will provide an important asset to help protect the Great Barrier Reef as marine park inspectors, as well as strengthen relationships among the community, ranger networks and regulatory authorities.

Working with Traditional Owners

The Coalition is committed to ensuring sustainable use of marine resources in the marine park and will increase support for the Traditional Use Marine Resource Agreements.

We will provide \$300,000 for compliance vessels to support the work of Traditional Owners and the Yarrabah community as they implement their Traditional Use Marine Resource Agreement.

Action against poaching

Complementing the compliance work of Indigenous rangers, the Coalition provided \$2 million through the Australian Crime Commission to investigate wildlife and environment crime around the Great Barrier Reef and the Torres Strait.

The Australian Crime Commission is working with the Australian Federal Police, Australian Border Force, state and territory law enforcement agencies and Commonwealth, state and territory departments on suspected organised illegal poaching and trade of turtle and dugong meat.

Citizens of the Reef

Protecting the Reef requires a partnership between the community, business, farmers, scientists and the Government. Our Reef 2050 Plan was developed with this partnership and we must ensure the co-operation continues as we deliver on its implementation.

The Coalition will commit \$1.3 million to support a Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef digital platform, to raise awareness of the challenges the Reef faces and, importantly, the role the community can play in protecting the Reef.

7. Addressing Climate Change and the Reef

Climate change is a challenge for coral reefs around the world, including the Great Barrier Reef.

By playing its part in the global response to the challenge of climate change, Australia is helping protect the Great Barrier Reef and all reefs around the world.

Australia signed the Paris Climate Change Agreement earlier this year and is seeking to ratify the Paris Agreement and the Kyoto Protocol by the end of the year.

Our climate change policy is working. We are on track to meet and beat our 2020 emissions reductions targets and on track to meet our ambitious, responsible 2030 targets. This will see our emissions per person reduce by more than 50 per cent – among the largest reductions among major economies.

Our comprehensive renewables policy will see a doubling of large scale renewable energy over the next four years. We have established a \$1 billion Clean Energy Innovation Fund and are rolling out a \$350 million large scale solar strategy.

Our new Reef Fund will provide more support for investments that tackle climate change.

Tackling water quality under the Emissions Reduction Fund

Our Emissions Reduction Fund is delivering major results. Already 143 million tonnes of emissions reductions have been secured – an investment of \$1.7 billion in emissions reductions.

The Emissions Reduction Fund is supporting more than 300 practical emissions reducing projects, including projects directly benefitting water quality in the Great Barrier Reef.

For example, the Queensland Government has partnered with carbon specialists, landholders and farmers under the Catchment Conservation Alliance to use funding from the Emissions Reduction Fund to improve land in the Reef catchment: storing carbon in the landscape, and reducing runoff into the Reef at the same time.

The Catchment Conservation Alliance project has successfully contracted for 20 million tonnes under the Fund, including a 15 million tonne project targeting the Great Barrier Reef

catchment. This \$150 million investment (based on average prices under the Fund) is the largest contracted project under the Emissions Reduction Fund so far.

The Coalition will continue to hold Emissions Reduction Fund auctions, which provides powerful, direct incentives to projects that can reduce emissions and help tackle reef water quality.

The Choice

The Coalition has a strong track record of protecting the Great Barrier Reef, tackling climate change, and delivering practical environmental projects.

The Coalition will deliver a new \$1 billion Reef Fund to mobilise investment finance to tackle the two biggest threats facing the Great Barrier Reef – climate change and the need to improve water quality.

The new \$1 billion Reef Fund is the latest innovation in our strong track record of working to protect the reef.

We ended plans under Labor to dump capital dredge spoil in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and we enshrined this ban in law. We have set out a comprehensive plan to manage the reef out to 2050, and have been endorsed by the World Heritage Committee as a global leader in reef management. We have announced \$460 million in funding to protect the Reef in our time in office.

We have a comprehensive climate change plan in place to reduce Australia's emissions and are playing our part in the global response to the challenge of climate change.

We will meet and beat Australia's 2020 carbon reduction target and we will reduce our emissions by 26-28 per cent by 2030.

Our Emissions Reduction Fund is delivering carbon emissions reductions at low cost to our economy through innovation, investment, and jobs growth.

Under the Coalition, Australia continues to have some of the most stringent and effective environmental laws in the world.

Labor's record on the Great Barrier Reef is clear.

Under Labor's watch the World Heritage Committee put the Great Barrier Reef on the watch list to be listed as 'in danger.' Labor had plans for five massive dredge disposal projects in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park's water.

Labor's approach to the environment is to tax businesses, increase costs for households, and undercut Australia's competitiveness. Labor wants to reintroduce a carbon tax – a tax that increases your bills and makes your electricity more expensive.

Labor's track record in Government is exceptional only in its degree of failure.

Incompetence and mismanagement were the hallmarks of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Labor Government, from the disastrous Home Insulation Programme to the failed Cash for Clunkers scheme, and the Green Loans scandal.

Costs

The Coalition will invest \$1 billion in a new Reef Fund to protect and restore our treasured Great Barrier Reef.



THE NATIONALS
for Regional Australia

For further details of the Coalition's plan go to
www.liberal.org.au/our-plan
nationals.org.au/our-plan/