

Environment and Communications
Answers to questions on notice
Agriculture, Water and the Environment Portfolio

Question No: SQ22-000140
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Division/Agency: Heritage Reef and Ocean Division
Topic: Great Barrier Reef announcement
Question Date: 22 February 2022
Question Type: Written

Senator Urquhart asked:

1. With reference to the government's Great Barrier Reef announcement of \$1 billion over 9 years, can you tell me how much of that is to be spent over the forward estimates and how much is to be spent beyond the forward estimates? Can you provide a breakdown of funding to be spent year by year over the next nine years?
2. With reference to the \$579.9 million for water quality, how much is to be spent over the forward estimates, and how much is to be spent beyond the forward estimates?
3. The government has said that this funding will assist land managers with improving what quality, can you tell me how many land managers the government anticipates it will work with as part of this program?
4. Can you outline how this funding will improve water quality?
5. With reference to the \$74.4 million for Traditional Owner and community-led projects, how much is to be spent over the forward estimates, and how much will be spent beyond that? Will the "community-led projects" be led by First Nations groups?
6. Of the \$92.7 million for research, how much will be spent over the forward estimates? How much will be spent beyond the forward estimates?

Answer:

1. Of the \$1 billion, \$421.5 million is committed over the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 and \$578.4 million is committed between 2026-27 and 2029-30. A breakdown of this funding by financial year is provided below.

2021-22 (\$m)	2022-23 (\$m)	2023-24 (\$m)	2024-25 (\$m)	2025-26 (\$m)	2026-27 (\$m)	2027-28 (\$m)	2028-29 (\$m)	2029-30 (\$m)
5.2	46.6	74.7	147.0	147.9	147.4	145.4	141.2	144.5

2. Of the \$579.9 million for water quality, \$221.9 million is committed over the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 and \$358 million is committed between 2026-27 and 2029-30.
3. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment is in the early stages of designing the rollout of the water quality investment. The design process will evaluate previous projects and prioritise investments that are most likely to meet the outcomes of the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan. Further detail was provided in response this question during the Estimates hearing (refer to Hansard, Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee, 14 February 2022, page 67 and 68).
4. Investments will help improve water quality by:
 - a. supporting farmers to voluntarily reduce the runoff of fertiliser, pesticide and soil from their properties through the adoption of more efficient farming practices;
 - b. repairing landscapes with actively eroding gullies and streambanks to reduce sediment pollution; and

- c. addressing sources of water pollution across other land uses, including pollutants from urban and public lands.
5. Of the \$74.4 million for strengthening partnerships and stewardship, \$35.9 million is committed over the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 and \$38.5 million is committed between 2026-27 and 2029-30.

Under this component, \$12.6 million has been specifically committed towards Traditional Owner led on-ground catchment-based Reef protection projects. Under the \$252.9 million provided to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, \$17.4 million has been committed towards increasing Traditional Owner involvement in Reef management through the Authority's Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement program.

It is important to note the above funding is a baseline. There is no ceiling to Traditional Owner eligibility to also apply for funding under other investments such as the water quality program.

6. Of the \$92.7 million for reef restoration and adaptation, \$44.1 million is committed over the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 and \$48.6 million is committed between 2026-27 and 2029-30.