

Queensland Government response
Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce
Final Report
August 2016

Prepared by: Office of the Great Barrier Reef, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

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August 2016

Foreword

The Great Barrier Reef is precious to all Queenslanders. It is our responsibility to care for it on behalf of the people of the world. But the Reef is in trouble. Climate change, catchment run-off, coastal development and direct impacts from activities such as illegal fishing have all impacted on the health of the Reef in recent decades. The recent bleaching event has driven home its fragile nature and reinforced the need for us to do everything in our power to protect and maintain it.

The Palaszczuk Government when coming to office made a number of significant election commitments through its Saving the Great Barrier Reef policy. This included new ports legislation to manage port development and dredging, reinstating vegetation clearing laws, addressing climate change and improving water quality. The Palaszczuk Government also committed to the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan (Reef 2050 Plan) which sets out what actions will be taken by the Australian and Queensland governments, in partnership with other stakeholders to improve the condition of the Reef.

One of my first tasks as Minister for the Great Barrier Reef was establishing the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce to provide advice on the best approach to meeting the water quality targets outlined in the Reef 2050 Plan and how to invest an additional \$90 million over five years.

The Taskforce has representatives with expertise in marine and catchment science, industry, economics and community engagement. It was chaired by Queensland's Chief Scientist, Dr Geoff Garrett, AO.

The Taskforce has taken a 'no holds barred' approach to providing advice on the way forward, which I value greatly. The recommendations outlined set the stage for a bold new era of reform in water quality improvement. Importantly, the Taskforce recognised that there is no single tool to achieve the targets. We will need to use all the tools at our disposal in a much more coordinated and integrated way and clearly communicate the need for change more broadly across our regional communities.

The recommendations include improved communications, better extension services, more outcome-based regulations, incentives, more focus on innovation, finer scale monitoring, leveraging of investment through partnerships and two major demonstrator projects in the high priority areas of the Wet Tropics and Burdekin.

The Queensland Government has considered the recommendations and has agreed, or agreed in principle, to all of them.

Some recommendations will require further public consultation to implement (for example, regulatory reforms) or may require working with the Australian Government (for example, governance reforms and investment planning). These will be progressed keeping the spirit of the Taskforce and its recommendations front of mind.

I'd like to thank the Taskforce members and the Chair for their tireless work in bringing together such a comprehensive report and their ongoing commitment to the protection of the Great Barrier Reef. I'd also like to thank them for their continuing engagement with stakeholders to ensure that these recommendations are practical and can be effectively implemented.

I look forward to working with stakeholders, experts and community members in implementing the suite of recommendations to improve reef water quality.

Dr Steven Miles MP
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and
Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef

Contents

Foreword.....	iii
Summary.....	vi
Introduction	vii
Background.....	vii
Response to recommendations	viii
Implementation	viii



Summary

The Great Barrier Reef is important to all Queenslanders and the world. But it is under pressure from a range of impacts, including catchment run-off which leads to poor water quality.

The Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce was established in May 2015 to provide the Queensland Government with advice on the best possible approach to working towards its ambitious water quality targets and recommend the priority actions for investing the new \$90 million in funding.

The Taskforce released an Interim Report in December 2015 and undertook comprehensive consultation on its initial findings and recommendations. Based on this feedback, the Taskforce refined its recommendations and released a Final Report in May 2016.

The Queensland Government has agreed, or agreed in principle, with all of the Taskforce recommendations, noting that some will require formal public consultation processes or working with stakeholders and/or the Australian Government before they can be fully implemented.

The Office of the Great Barrier Reef in the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection will be responsible for overseeing implementation of the recommendations and investment of the \$90 million. The Taskforce has provided a proposed implementation path in its Final Report which will help this work.

The Queensland Government has already commenced implementation of some of the recommendations. These were announced at the release of the Final Report and include investments into monitoring improvements, additional extension resources, communications, establishment of an innovation fund and the commencement of two major integrated projects. This response reinforces the Queensland Government's commitment to these actions and sets out a pathway for the remaining recommendations to be addressed.

Introduction

The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef ecosystem, stretching some 2,300km along the Queensland coast. One of Australia's most treasured natural wonders and a global icon, the Great Barrier Reef is a unique ecosystem which hosts one of the most diverse ranges of species on the planet. The Great Barrier Reef's importance was recognised by the World Heritage Committee in 1981 which listed it as a World Heritage property due to its 'natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.' The Queensland and Australian Governments are jointly responsible for its management and maintaining its Outstanding Universal Value.

The Great Barrier Reef is facing a number of challenges - climate change and coral bleaching, poor water quality caused by land based run-off, coastal development and events such as cyclones and crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks are the key threats to the Great Barrier Reef. It has long been acknowledged that coral reef resilience to pressures such as climate change depends strongly on reducing locally manageable stressors such as water quality. This year's coral bleaching event reinforces the need to reduce other pressures so the Reef can recover more rapidly.

According to the science, the greatest water quality risks to the Reef are from nitrogen discharge which provide excess nutrients and are associated with crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks, and fine sediment discharge which reduces the light available to seagrass ecosystems and inshore coral reefs. A large proportion of sediment losses is derived from grazing lands, and the dominant source of nitrogen is from cropping lands, predominantly sugarcane.

Despite significant investment from both the Queensland and Australian government over the last decade through various programs, reef report card results indicate that the resulting changes have not been rapid or widespread enough to meet water quality targets.

Background

The Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce was established in May 2015 to provide the Queensland Government with advice on the best possible approach on how it can meet its long-term water quality targets and invest \$90 million over five years. The Queensland Government as part of its Saving the Great Barrier Reef election commitments, provided \$100 million over five years. As part of this, \$10 million was allocated to the establishment of three net-free fishing zones in the Great Barrier Reef. The Taskforce provided advice on the remaining \$90 million.

Terms of Reference (Extract):

The Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce will provide advice and recommendations to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef and the Queensland Government more broadly on:

- the best approach to meeting the government's water quality targets, including the effectiveness and cost of robust regulations, incentives, Best Management Practice Programs, market-based trading mechanisms and other policy instruments, or a combination thereof.
- priority areas for investment for the additional \$100 million including:
 - upgrades to, and extension of the water quality monitoring network, scientific research where critical to support the recommended approach to meeting the targets, and/or facilitating the effective translation of current research into practice improvement.
 - promoting environmentally sustainable industry practices especially to support primary producers in Reef catchments to reduce fertiliser and sediment run-off (including consideration of a potential net benefit policy)
 - opportunities to align different sources of funding (for example, from the Australian Government) and leverage Queensland Government investment effectively.
 - opportunities to maximise and align other sources of funding such as private/philanthropic and various science funds (for example, the Advance Queensland initiative and National Environmental Science Programme).
- ensuring outcomes can be effectively monitored and reported over time, including providing advice on the adequacy of existing monitoring and reporting activities.

The key objective for the Taskforce was to provide advice to the Queensland Government on how to help ensure that clean water flows from the rivers to the sea to protect the Great Barrier Reef for future generations.

The Taskforce released an Interim Report in December 2015 and undertook comprehensive consultation on its initial findings and recommendations. Based on this feedback, the Taskforce refined its recommendations and released its Final Report in May 2016.

Response to recommendations

The Queensland Government has agreed, or agreed in principle, with all of the Taskforce recommendations, noting that some will require formal public consultation processes or working with the Australian Government.

A formal response to each of the recommendations is provided in Table 1, along with notes on implementation which outlines where some recommendations are already being actioned.

Implementation

The Queensland Government has already commenced implementation of some of the recommendations as outlined in Table 1.

The Office of the Great Barrier Reef in the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection will be responsible for overseeing implementation of the recommendations and investment of the \$90 million. The Taskforce provided a proposed implementation path in its Final Report which will help guide this work.

	Taskforce recommendations	Agree/ Disagree	Government response	Notes on implementation
1	<p>Review targets in 2016, feeding into the review of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.</p> <p>1.1. Review and refine the water quality targets, including targets for nutrients, sediment, pesticides, land management practice change and catchment health indicators.</p> <p>1.2. Establish regional (and basin scale) targets for priority pollutants linked to Reef health.</p>	Agree	<p>The Queensland Government agrees that the water quality targets (reduction of nitrogen by up to 80% and sediment by up to 50% in key catchments such as the Wet Tropics and the Burdekin by 2025) should be refined in 2016 as part of the scheduled review of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.</p> <p>1.1 Refined targets will be considered and discussed with stakeholders through the review of Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, expected to be completed by June 2017. This will also feed into a mid-term review of the Reef 2050 Plan due in 2018.</p> <p>1.2 The review of targets will include utilising eReefs modelling to refine targets to a finer scale (35 basins). This will also build upon technical work already completed on regional water quality improvement plans.</p>	<p>Immediate commencement.</p> <p>Action is already underway on reviewing the targets, with technical support and target development contracted.</p>
2	<p>Substantially improve communication and information to build understanding of the pressures on the Reef and to support management practice and social change.</p> <p>2.1. Develop a collaborative communication approach with stakeholders to ensure everyone in the community understands how they can be part of the solution and contribute to improving Reef health.</p> <p>2.2. Establish consistent communication and messaging on Reef matters including across governments and with partners, with well-defined roles and responsibilities, including through a single website.</p> <p>2.3. Undertake an annual science synthesis workshop to generate new knowledge, better communicate science and inform policy, management practices and research priorities.</p>	Agree	<p>The Queensland Government supports the need for improved communication and information to support large-scale change in practice.</p> <p>2.1 The Queensland Government will develop a communication strategy within Reef communities to communicate positively and effectively with farmers, graziers, councils, industry and community members about what steps they can take to improve water quality. The Queensland Government will also explore establishment of a digital Reef hub which links together all of the information on the Reef and provides a portal for two way flow of information for everyone involved and interested in Reef management.</p> <p>2.2 The Queensland Government will work to ensure there are consistent messages on Reef matters by continuing to work with the Australian Government on issues of joint concern.</p> <p>2.3 An annual science synthesis workshop will be undertaken, with leadership from the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan Independent Science Panel.</p>	<p>Immediate commencement.</p> <p>Action is already underway on consistent messages, with a joint communications strategy with the Australian Government for the Reef 2050 Plan recently completed. A network of communications officers has been established to improve coordination of messages and provision of information.</p>
3	<p>Invest in more effective, targeted and coordinated extension to support large-scale land management practice change.</p> <p>3.1. Restore the long-term government commitment to resource and rebuild capacity in extension services across the Reef.</p>	Agree	<p>The Queensland Government agrees with the recommendation to invest in more effective, targeted and coordinated extension.</p> <p>3.1/3.2 The Queensland Government will provide a much needed boost to extension capacity with additional investment.</p> <p>3.3/3.4 Queensland Government will also provide support for training and accreditation and encourage more innovative extension approaches.</p>	<p>Immediate commencement.</p> <p>Significant additional funding will be provided to boost extension resources, noting that it may take some time to build capacity up. This will be overseen by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, but will also</p>

	Taskforce recommendations	Agree/ Disagree	Government response	Notes on implementation
	<p>3.2. Formalise extension networks and define leadership and roles and responsibilities across local delivery organisations (government, private and farmer-to-farmer), for a whole-of-farm business approach which incorporates Reef health outcomes.</p> <p>3.3. Support ongoing training programs and career development for accredited extension advisers.</p> <p>3.4. Make greater use of smarter and more innovative extension approaches including facilitated peer-to-peer learning, demonstration projects and new technologies (for example, phone apps).</p> <p>3.5. Partner with the agricultural industry to develop a large-scale behaviour change program (already underway with the cane industry) to encourage farmers to adopt specific actions, by better understanding their motivations and the associated benefits.</p>		<p>3.5 Queensland Government supports the development of a behaviour change program across industries and has already commenced working in partnership with the cane sector.</p>	<p>include investment in private extension providers in the Reef regions and exploration of new ways to deliver extension services.</p> <p>Work is already underway to develop a behaviour change program in consultation with the cane industry. The first stage is scoping the behaviour change program and undertaking research through conversations with canegrowers and relevant stakeholders to understand the motivations for change and the benefits and barriers of specific actions.</p>
4	<p>Establish greater use of incentives and market approaches to support water quality improvements.</p> <p>4.1. Targeted use of market approaches such as tenders/reverse auctions (for example, for purchasing nitrogen reduction) should be used where practical.</p> <p>4.2. Develop new incentives to accelerate adoption of improved management practices or support land use change (for example, incentives for practice change, acquiring areas, and stewardship payments for restoration).</p> <p>4.3. Explore innovative approaches to support existing tools and manage risk (for example, yield insurance, concessional farming loans).</p> <p>4.4. Water quality trading approaches may be viable in some settings in the future but will require a staged pathway of regulation and detailed farm level information to support implementation.</p>	Agree	<p>The Queensland Government supports the use of incentives and market approaches to drive water quality improvement.</p> <p>4.1/4.2/4.3 Incentives and other market based instruments will be used in the two major integrated projects. These will be developed and further scoped with regional delivery organisations to ensure they are targeted effectively to landholder circumstances.</p> <p>4.4 The Queensland Government will consider pursuing trading approaches longer term if other methods of reaching the targets are not successful.</p>	<p>Incentives and market approaches to be implemented as part of the two major integrated projects.</p> <p>Staged implementation will be required for trading approaches longer term across the Reef, if they prove to be necessary.</p>
5	<p>Implement staged regulations to reduce water pollution throughout the Reef regions.</p> <p>5.1. Set and progressively reduce catchment pollution load limits in legislation to provide a regulatory</p>	Agree in principle	<p>The Queensland Government accepts, in principle, using targeted regulatory approaches to reduce sediment and nutrient pollution throughout the Reef regions.</p> <p>The Queensland Government agrees that regulation can be an effective</p>	<p>Staged implementation.</p> <p>Formal consultation on any proposed regulatory amendments will be</p>

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	<p>framework to help drive load reductions to meet water quality targets.</p> <p>5.2. Incentives to continuously improve practices should be complemented by staged regulations that should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve existing minimum regulated standards (for example for urban, stormwater and point source) over time - establish minimum standards across all agricultural industries to address sediment and nutrient pollution - mandate the provision of farm level yield data, nutrient and other relevant data across all agricultural industries - consider progression to other approaches, including farm-based caps, if other stages are not successful within 5 years. <p>5.3. Minimum standards must be set in consultation with affected industries and have explicit regard to the cost and benefits of those standards.</p> <p>5.4. Extend regulations to protect riparian areas and natural wetlands to all Reef regions, taking into consideration any impact this may have on landholders' ability to trade in ecosystem services.</p> <p>5.5. Establish regulations to ensure no net decline in water quality from intensification and expansion in the agricultural sector.</p> <p>5.6. Establish a water quality offset framework that can apply across industries (urban, ports, agriculture).</p> <p>5.7. Seek continuous improvement in regulations and compliance capacity for point source pollution, stormwater, erosion and sediment control in urban and industrial areas.</p> <p>5.8. Improve management of irrigation to maximise water use efficiency and to minimise pollutant losses and associated impacts on water quality.</p>		<p>tool when supported by extension, incentives and compliance and will consider pursuing regulation as part of the mix of responses. However, further detailed analysis and consultation will be required to determine the feasibility of each of the specific proposals and how they could be implemented.</p> <p>5.1 Establishing end of catchment pollution limits will help to provide a holistic framework to inform investment and regulatory decision-making.</p> <p>5.2/5.3 The Queensland Government will work with industry to develop farm scale minimum standards to target the most polluting practices while at the same time reducing regulatory burden for the best performers. It also supports the intent of gathering finer scale data to help focus efforts towards high risk areas and support regulations. The Queensland Government agrees that targeted regulations introduced in progressive stages may continue to drive further load reductions over time.</p> <p>5.4 The Queensland Government supports expanding the protection of wetland and riparian areas and introduced changes to the Vegetation Management Act to Parliament (March 2016) to extend riparian protections.</p> <p>5.5/5.6 The Queensland Government supports the growth of the agricultural sector, but agrees that expansion and intensification of agricultural land uses has potential to further contribute to declines in reef water quality. The Queensland Government will work with relevant stakeholders to identify options to manage this risk, including the option to introduce a new water quality offset framework.</p> <p>5.7 The Queensland Government will continue to work with relevant stakeholders to build capacity to improve urban and industrial diffuse and point source nutrient and sediment pollution. Any policy response will need to be proportionate to the relative contribution of these sources to declines in Reef water quality.</p> <p>5.8 The Queensland Government agrees that further improvements in water use efficiency on irrigated lands have the potential to reduce surplus nitrogen reaching the waterways. The Queensland Government will review existing regulatory frameworks and standards applying to irrigation practices to identify options for further improvement.</p>	<p>required prior to implementation.</p> <p>Regulatory amendments to extend protection of riparian areas to all Reef regions were introduced to Queensland Parliament in 2016.</p>
6	Better align science and fund development of new ideas and solutions.	Agree	The Queensland Government supports improved alignment of research and innovation, and funding for innovation.	Immediate commencement.

	Taskforce recommendations	Agree/ Disagree	Government response	Notes on implementation
	<p>6.1. Encourage the research community, governments and industry to work together to align investment with the existing Reef Plan Research Development and Innovation Strategy.</p> <p>6.2. Establish an Innovation Fund that builds on existing activities to support the development, scaling up and roll-out of promising new technologies and approaches.</p> <p>6.3. Establish a Reef innovation network to drive boundary-crossing collaboration among stakeholders, researchers and innovators from diverse backgrounds to explore new solutions to improve Reef water quality.</p>		<p>6.1 The Queensland Government supports a single unified research and development strategy and will continue to work with the Australian Government through the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan to clearly articulate both governments' research needs in relation to Reef water quality. The Queensland Government will align Queensland funding programs to address these priorities and encourage the Australian Government to do the same.</p> <p>6.2 The Queensland Government supports the establishment of an Innovation Fund to support projects that trial innovative approaches to land management, monitoring, systems repair and water treatment, and will work with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and other organisations to match these funds from corporate/philanthropic sources.</p> <p>6.3 The Queensland Government will continue to collaborate with a range of stakeholders, industries, scientists and innovators to identify new solutions. For example, through the Advance Queensland Small Business Innovation Research program, Queensland will work with a range of businesses to help develop more cost effective water quality sensors. Similarly, a forum will be held mid-2016 to draw together new ideas around water treatment solutions for coastal systems, drawn from other areas and industries (for example, floating wetlands, bioreactors, aquaculture).</p>	
7	<p>Fund additional long-term and finer scale catchment monitoring, modelling and reporting for improved decision-making and adaptive management.</p> <p>7.1. Fund high priority catchment monitoring and evaluation gaps to enable better understanding of current adoption of management practices across the industries and progress to water quality targets.</p> <p>7.2. As part of the two major integrated projects, provide funding for finer scale paddock and catchment monitoring, modelling and evaluation. This will provide timely feedback to farmers and support, encourage and embed improved practices and explore more affordable monitoring technologies to expand this approach.</p> <p>7.3. Ensure monitoring and modelling of land management and water quality feeds into regular, integrated reporting across the Queensland and Australian Government and can provide 'what if' scenarios to assist decision-making and adaptive management.</p>	Agree	<p>The Queensland Government supports funding for additional monitoring, modelling and reporting across the Reef.</p> <p>7.1 The Queensland Government supports funding to fill critical monitoring gaps in the Paddock to Reef program and deliver finer scale monitoring that can provide feedback to landholders on the impacts of their practice changes.</p> <p>7.2 The two major integrated projects will be supported by finer scale monitoring as part of a detailed evaluation and reporting strategy. Queensland Government, through the Innovation Fund and Advance Queensland, will also explore more affordable water quality sensors to help increase the coverage of water quality monitoring across the Reef catchments, commencing in the two major integrated projects.</p> <p>7.3/7.4 Queensland Government will continue to work closely with the Australian Government in delivering a joint monitoring program that feeds into regular reef report cards to demonstrate progress towards targets and the outcomes of joint government investments.</p> <p>7.5 Queensland Government supports making information publicly available to demonstrate outcomes of Queensland investment. Queensland will work closely with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in developing the Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program and will</p>	Immediate commencement.

	Taskforce recommendations	Agree/ Disagree	Government response	Notes on implementation
	<p>7.4. Continue co-funding Reef monitoring programs from the catchment to the Reef with the Australian Government to properly evaluate and report on outcomes of investment, and better align program delivery.</p> <p>7.5. Ensure public availability of information and improve communication and visualisation of monitoring results.</p>		<p>promote innovative approaches to communication and visualisation of data that spans catchment to reef.</p>	
8	<p>Implement two well facilitated major integrated projects (MIPS) in pollutant 'hot spot' areas to evaluate the most effective combination of tools to inform the design of future programs.</p> <p>8.1. One major project should engage with cane growers in the Wet Tropics (for example, in the Tully, Johnstone and/or Herbert) to focus on reducing nutrient and pesticide loss.</p> <p>8.2. The other major project should engage with graziers in the Burdekin (for example, in the Bowen-Broken-Bogie and/or Upper Burdekin) to focus on reducing sediment and particulate nutrient run-off.</p> <p>8.3. Local stakeholders and landholders must be actively involved in the design of the projects and the interventions being tested, and this should be adapted over time as needed.</p> <p>8.4. Use the opportunity to identify and trial mechanisms for reform in the governance arrangements for delivering water quality outcomes.</p> <p>8.5. Monitoring and evaluation of the biophysical, social and economic outcomes of the interventions, delivery mechanisms and governance arrangements must be a major component of the projects so that learnings can be transferred to different locations and scales.</p> <p>8.6. Consider ongoing support to maintain and extend the successful outcomes of the MIPS approaches and tools.</p>	Agree	<p>The Queensland Government supports the delivery of two major integrated projects in the Wet Tropics and Burdekin</p> <p>8.1/ 8.6 The Queensland Government will work with regional delivery partners to design and implement the two major integrated projects from the ground up.</p> <p>A key component will be evaluating the outcomes of these projects so the approach can be extended to other regions if successful. A level of flexibility will be built into the projects to allow for adaptive management as different challenges emerge.</p>	<p>Immediate commencement.</p>

	Taskforce recommendations	Agree/ Disagree	Government response	Notes on implementation
9	<p>Develop a strategic investment plan and establish Reef-friendly public-private partnerships.</p> <p>9.1. Develop a combined investment plan for the \$90 million and the existing \$35 million per year Queensland Government funding (that is, \$230 million over the next four years).</p> <p>9.2. Develop multi-year joint investment plans with the Australian Government to pool resources, agree delivery mechanisms and provide greater certainty of funding and clearly address shared policy issues and priorities.</p> <p>9.3. Work with the Australian Government to transition the Reef Trust to an independent entity, better placed to attract private sector investment and philanthropic funding.</p> <p>9.4. Develop plans to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leverage corporate and philanthropic funds through public-private partnerships - support conservation financing mechanisms (for example, reduced interest rates for best management practice accredited farmers, green bonds). - encourage and support innovative catchment scale on-ground delivery partnerships to leverage collaboration, skills and energy from private and community enterprises. 	Agree in principle	<p>The Queensland Government supports the development of a strategic investment plan and the establishment of public-private partnerships.</p> <p>9.1 The Queensland Government will prepare an Investment Plan for 2016-17 combining the new funding (\$21.73 million) with the existing \$35 million per year investment in water quality initiatives to ensure a better coordinated approach. The Queensland Government will also seek to leverage funding across a range of areas for example, through the two major integrated projects with landholder contributions; through the Innovation Fund with private partners; and through co-funding of projects through Reef Trust.</p> <p>9.2 The Queensland Government will engage with the Australian Government through the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan to update the plan's five year Investment Strategy to help identify investment priorities and ensure alignment across governments.</p> <p>9.3 The Queensland Government will engage with the Australian Government on the future arrangements for Reef Trust and encourage a model that can best attract private and philanthropic funding.</p> <p>9.4 The Queensland Government will continue to explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as reduced interest rate loans and green bonds through a range of forums, including working collaboratively with the Australian Government on innovative financing.</p>	<p>Immediate commencement.</p> <p>A costings report outlining the total costs of achieving the water quality targets will be released later in 2016.</p> <p>Further discussions with the Australian Government will be necessary to implement some of these recommendations.</p>

	Taskforce recommendations	Agree/ Disagree	Government response	Notes on implementation
10	<p>Simplify and strengthen governance and clarify roles and responsibilities within and between the Queensland and Australian Governments.</p> <p>10.1. Implement a simplified and more effective governance structure across Queensland and Australian governments to deliver better joint arrangements in funding and decision-making, and more efficient delivery arrangements and trial them through the major integrated projects.</p> <p>10.2. Reach agreement on critical delivery systems operating within catchments and undertake progressive reform to improve coordination between partners including local, Queensland and Australian governments, regional NRM bodies, industry bodies, River Improvement Trusts, Drainage Boards and Traditional Owners to ensure more efficient and informed delivery.</p> <p>10.3. Monitor and report on the effectiveness of the governance system affecting Reef water quality outcomes, resolving agreement on objectives, alignment of programs, clarity of roles and responsibilities and accountabilities.</p> <p>10.4. Work across the Queensland Government to ensure the existing \$35 million per year investment has a direct Reef water quality benefit to respond to the Queensland Audit Office recommendations.</p>	Agree in principle	<p>The Queensland Government supports the need for strong governance in relation to Reef water quality, and the improved clarification of roles and responsibilities within and between the Queensland and Australian governments.</p> <p>10.1/10.2 The Queensland Government will work with the Australian Government to increase the effectiveness of existing governance arrangements, simplify governance arrangements where possible and more clearly articulate roles and responsibilities. Effective joint governance arrangements are in place in areas outside water quality (for example, the Joint Field Management Program) and these types of models will be explored further in context of joint water quality programs. As part of this, regional delivery mechanisms will be reviewed.</p> <p>10.3 The Queensland Government supports monitoring the health of governance systems and will promote regular reporting through the Reef Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program and regional report cards.</p> <p>10.4 The Queensland Government will explore options in 2017 to better coordinate and align Reef funding across Queensland Government agencies to respond to the Taskforce recommendations and similar recommendations made by the Queensland Audit Office.</p>	<p>Commencement 2017.</p> <p>Further discussions with the Australian Government will be necessary to implement some of these recommendations.</p>