



## RRRC welcomes \$500m funding for Great Barrier Reef in budget

The Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC), a Cairns-based environmental NGO, has welcomed the announcement of \$500 million for Great Barrier Reef protection from the Australian Government in the 2018 Budget.

The time is now to invest in resilience and restoration strategies for the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) as climate change and other health impacts continue to threaten its health.

The funding will be spread over a number of organisations and several important active Reef protection and restoration efforts, including controlling Crown of Thorns starfish, research into coral restoration techniques and improving the quality of water flowing out to the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

RRRC currently manages a large number of projects in these areas, primarily through the National Environmental Science Program (NESP)'s [Tropical Water Quality Hub](#).

RRRC managing director Sheriden Morris participated in the announcement of the funding by Environment and Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg in Cairns on April 29 and said it was 'now or never' when it came to actively intervening to protect and rebuild the Great Barrier Reef.

"The most important thing we can do to protect the Reef is to work globally to limit and reverse climate change, which is the source of most of these impacts on the Reef," she said.

"However, even if we could stop emitting all sources of greenhouse gas today, we would still experience relatively rapid increases in temperature over the next few decades. That change is 'locked-in' to the system. Mass bleaching events have already impacted the Great Barrier Reef in 2016 and 2017. So even if we stop all emissions today, it's very likely that multiple mass bleaching events will still occur in the near future and continue damaging the GBR, as well as other reefs around the world.

"This means that *stopping climate change is not enough to protect the Great Barrier Reef*. In addition, we must explore every option possible for immediate interventions for the health of the GBR, even at a local scale for individual reefs.

“This includes strategies like controlling coral-eating species like Crown of Thorns starfish. It includes developing and up-scaling restoration techniques like coral gardening. It includes working with farmers to reduce harmful and wasteful runoff of agricultural chemicals flowing out to the Reef. It even includes more outside-the-box strategies like restoring natural water movement and mixing at individual reef sites to reduce the stress that causes coral bleaching.

“These strategies aren’t distractions or band-aids. They are critical to making sure that when we reach a future in which the rate of global climate change has finally been brought under control, the Great Barrier Reef is still there, still the best in the world, supporting world-class biodiversity and a thriving tourism industry.”

In July, RRRC will be hosting the world’s first [Great Barrier Reef Restoration Symposium](#) in Cairns, which will bring together scientists, engineers and stakeholders from all over the world to discuss and plan the most effective techniques for active restoration of the Great Barrier Reef.

More information on Great Barrier Reef health intervention projects involving RRRC can be found below:

- [Crown of Thorns Starfish Targeted Control Program](#) – protecting coral from Crown of Thorns Starfish predation
- [Reef Havens](#) – restoring normal water movement and mixing at high-value reefs
- NESP Tropical Water Quality Hub projects including [Project 25](#) – working with farmers in Reef catchments to reduce runoff, and [Project 4.3](#) – evaluating coral restoration techniques

The Tropical Water Quality Hub is supported by the Australian Government’s National Environmental Science Program.

The Crown of Thorns Starfish Targeted Control Program is jointly run with the Association of Marine Park Tour Operators (AMPTO) and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

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**Media contact:**

Boyd Robertson: (07) 4050 7400 / 04 5814 4909 / [boyd.robertson@rrrc.org.au](mailto:boyd.robertson@rrrc.org.au)