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Incentive-based Reef protection the way forward

The State Opposition has urged the Bligh Government to take a leaf out of the Federal Government's book and embrace an incentive-based response to the protection of the Great Barrier Reef.

LNP Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability Glen Elmes said the Federal Government's \$200 million Reef Rescue project is the smart way to achieve long-term protection for the Reef.

"The funding and support announced in this package is the right approach to encouraging and supporting sustainable farm practices in this region,' Mr Elmes said.

"It was developed in conjunction with industry groups and conservationists, seeking to strike an achievable and sustainable balance between these interests.

"In stark contrast, the Bligh Government's approach has been to introduce heavy-handed legislation, backed by harsh financial penalties.

"The Bligh Government categorises farmers in the same group as the mining industry and sewage treatment plants. They simply don't understand that farmers are enthusiastic about embracing environmentally sustainable answers.

"This Reef Rescue project is over-subscribed. It is a clear indication that the way forward is to provide more incentive based schemes. The best way to change farming practices is to provide farmers with the help to do so.

"Instead of wasting the \$50 million allocated by the Bligh Government in the 2009-10 budget on their ill-conceived regulations, they should be using those funds to bolster the reef rescue package."

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