

ScoMo prepares to make huge Great Barrier Reef announcement

Scott Morrison is set to make a major announcement about the Great Barrier Reef when he visits the natural wonder on Friday.

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Government...

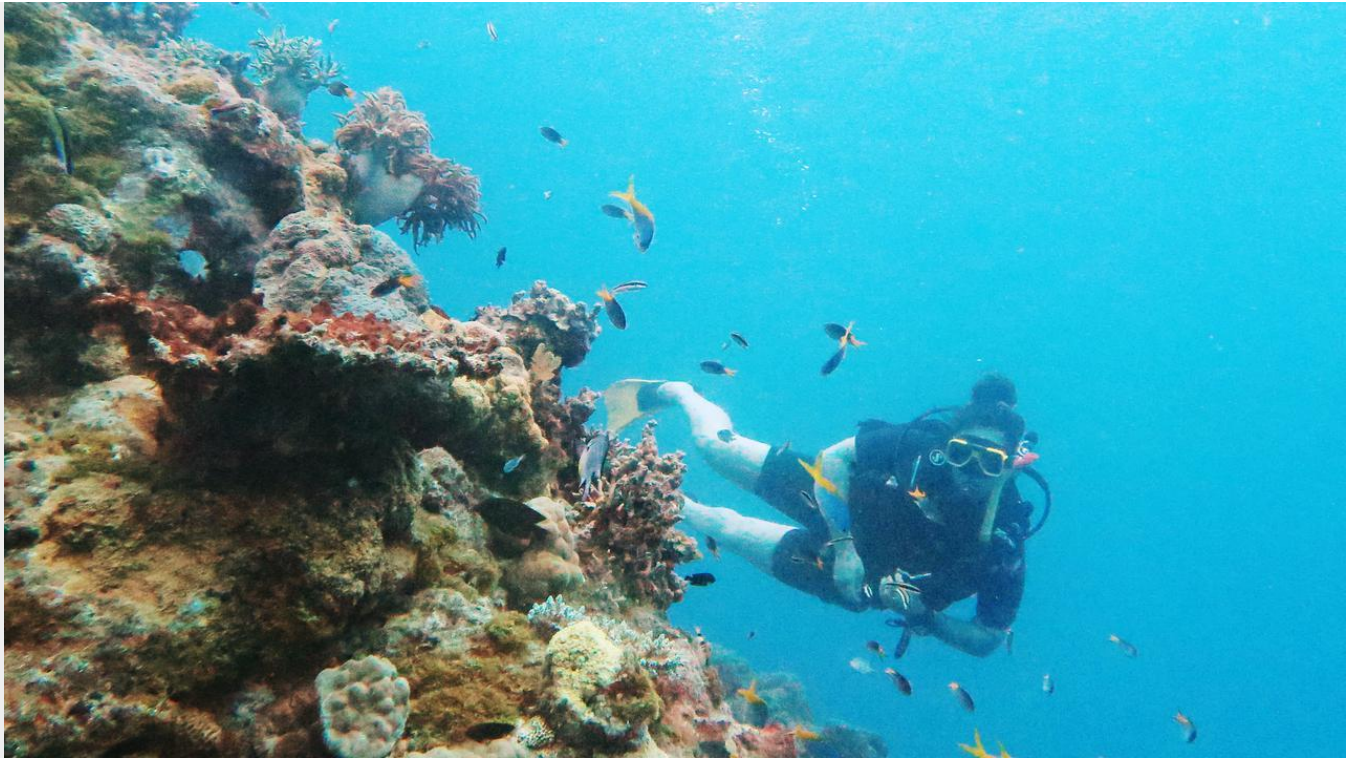
Scott Morrison has vowed to take the Great Barrier Reef to the next level with a major \$1 billion investment.

The Prime Minister will visit the coral reef with Leichhardt MP Warren Entsch on Friday as he seeks to shore up support in the region.

Mr Morrison said the investment was an extension to the \$2 billion outlined in the Reef 2050 plan.

“We are backing the health of the reef and the economic future of tourism operators, hospitality providers and Queensland communities that are at the heart of the reef economy,” the Prime Minister said.

“This is already the best managed reef in the world and today we take our commitment to a new level.”



The \$1bn announcement will go towards protecting the life of the reef.
Picture: Brendan Radke

The funding will assist in the deployment of new climate adaptation technology, investments in water quality programs and to reduce threats from predators such as the Crown of Thorns starfish.

Last year, the government narrowly avoided a push to have the Great Barrier Reef's health status downgraded to "in danger".

But following lobbying from Environment Minister Sussan Ley, UNESCO agreed to defer a decision until delegates could examine the reef later this year.

The status change was based on concerns about water quality in the region and the impact of climate change on the reef.

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It's anticipated the funding will help protect the 64,000 jobs that rely on the tourism industry in the area.



Mr Morrison will be hoping the investment will help quell anxieties of tourism providers. Picture: NCA NewsWire / Gary Ramage

Mr Morrison will be hoping the investment will help quell anxieties of tourism providers in the Far North who have been smashed by the pandemic and border closures.

Mark Olsen, chief executive of the region's peak tourism body, has said 9,000 jobs have been lost throughout the pandemic.

"At first it was the frontline staff — those on the part-time and casual roles, but as the pandemic extended on, we started losing highly skilled staff," the Tourism Tropical North Queensland boss told the ABC.

"We've lost a lot of skill and experience that has guided the region, which has been one of the most successful tourism destinations, over the last 30 years."

Earlier this month, Opposition leader Anthony Albanese committed \$163 million to "restoring and protecting the reef".