

Environment and Communications References Committee
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
Climate Council
Inquiry into the Great Barrier Reef 2050 Partnership Program
30 July 2018

QUESTION: Hansard page – Senator Keneally

Senator KENEALLY: I will come back to that study. Firstly, do you have any views on how the government could measure the foundation's performance in delivering outcomes under the partnership?

Dr Rice: I would probably have to take that one on notice, Senator, to be honest.

ANSWER:

Measuring impact

- Link the GBR expenditure to Reef 2050 targets and indicators, which might include making explicit 'tying' to the indicators and measurement of the indicators in the projects and interventions themselves. Don't just distribute the money to projects, the researchers involved in the program must have an ongoing Monitoring & Evaluation of key indicators, based on the baseline data they can access.
- The Federal Government has insisted that they gave the \$\$ to the GBRF because they can "leverage" the funds with private sector funding. So an explicit indicator of leveraging power could be developed i.e. for every govt \$\$ spent they MUST match it with a ROI of 2 or 3.
- There also needs to be sound corporate governance around, for example, transparency and probity.
- The Great Barrier Reef Partnership Program should research the limits to adaptation, and the thresholds beyond which local measures will make no impact – ideally, they would do that early on, and be prepared to halt the research for those interventions that face a threshold which we are close to surpassing.

Note: this is a very difficult question to answer, because it depends on the time frame, and we do not know what the GBRF intends to spend the money on. Ultimately, the only proof of the pudding will be the saving of the reef, but clearly that's not going to be done by this program alone (especially if it does nothing to cut emissions at source) and it would take far longer to assess than the time period of any government fund.