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The World Federation for Coral Reef Conservation
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Less talk, more action on reef

AAP

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The federal government has been accused of bullying other countries instead of taking action to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop will use climate change talks in Peru to argue the reef is not under threat.



The foreign minister will use climate talks in Peru to argue the Great Barrier Reef isn't in danger. She also plans to lobby members of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee not to list the reef as a site in danger and will argue the organization is at risk of being duped by activists.

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Greens senator Larissa Waters says the government is failing to take action and choosing instead to "lobby and bully" other countries.

"Even though the World Heritage Committee recommended a moratorium on damaging developments, the pace of approvals has continued unabated," she said, adding that a long-term plan for the reef failed to address the impacts of climate change.

Senator Waters highlighted approvals given to build mines in the Galilee Basin and the expansion of the controversial Abbot Point coal port near Bowen.

WWF-Australia chief executive Dermot O'Gorman says the reef should not be used as a political football.

"The government's own experts have clearly stated that current management arrangements are not enough to even halt the decline of the reef, let alone reverse the reef's decline," he said.

Queensland opposition environment spokeswoman Jackie Trad says Ms Bishop should put her energy into pressuring Premier Campbell Newman to do more to protect the reef.

Ms Bishop is expected to tell UNESCO an in-danger listing could set a dangerous precedent that could result in World Heritage assets being blacklisted in the countries of committee members.

She will argue Australia has addressed environmental threats to the reef, including those raised by UNESCO such as the dumping of dredge spoil and cutting agricultural runoff.

The World Heritage Committee will meet in June to decide whether to formally declare the reef as an asset in danger.

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The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing"....Edmund Burke

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