



The truth about the Reef Regs ...and why you should join our fight

What are the Reef Regs

- Full name: Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019
- The Bill will introduce even more restrictive regulation on industries, primarily agriculture, with the intention of reducing the amount of pollutants, nutrients and sediment in the Great Barrier Reef "lagoon" (the bit between the outer reef and the coastline)
- Cattle and grains producers in all six Reef Catchment Areas will be regulated, most for the first time

Why does AgForce oppose the Reef Regs

- The Bill is not needed
- It will impose onerous record-keeping and action and farm design plans on 12,500 graziers and 1,000 grain growers without any evidence that the Reef will benefit at all
- It unfairly targets primary producers (incorrectly assuming we are the main source of pollutants, nutrients and sediment) rather than taking a whole-of-landscape approach
- The agriculture industry and regional communities have been deliberately excluded from the main law-making process, and every single one of our suggested amendments have been ignored, yet the onus will be on us to abide by them
- The "one-size fits all" approach of the Bill - regardless of what you produce or where in the reef catchment you produce it - is clearly not going to lead to the best environmental outcomes

- The Bill give the Government the power to change minimum farming standards in any way at any time with no regard for the impacts on farmers or their communities. There is no mechanism to review or appeal any changes and no requirement that they be evidence-based
- The Bill is a grab for private business data. Farm advisors and chemical and fertiliser resellers will be required to keep and hand over to government on request records of any advice, products or services they've supplied to farmers. This includes advice on applying fertiliser and agricultural chemicals and on erosion control.

What is wrong with the science?

- The Queensland and Australian Governments have spent billions of dollars on Reef health research over the past two decades and the solutions are still not clear
- Despite what some - including the State Government and green groups - say, there is no consensus on Reef science
- The Bill is not based on the latest science. The most recent science they have considered is from 2017. The Government is relying on modelled outcomes rather than rigorous validating through an extensive network of land and Reef monitoring sites
- The validity of the science has been called into question by a number of respected reef scientists, including Dr Peter Ridd
- All we are asking the government is to make sure the science is sound before such disruptive and onerous regulations are imposed on farmers

What will be the impact on the industry?

- If implemented as is, these draconian laws could decimate Queensland's \$15 billion agriculture industry

What will be the impacts on producers?

- All commercial beef producers and grain growers (as well as sugarcane, fruit and vegetable growers) in the Great Barrier Reef catchment will have to comply with commodity-specific minimum practice standards stipulated by the Government
- Producers will need to assess the land condition of each paddock and write and implement an action plan for any grazing land in poor or degraded condition
- New cropping areas (grains, hay, fodder) will require a farm design plan demonstrating no runoff of sediment or nutrient. New areas greater than 30 hectares require a site inspection for land, soil and irrigation suitability
- Record-keeping of fertiliser use on pasture and crops and use of agricultural chemicals
- Grains minimum practice standards will be developed over the next three years

Don't farmers want to protect the Reef?

- Farmers take their responsibility to the environment and especially the Great Barrier Reef seriously
- They are engaged with a multitude of programs to drive farm practice improvement and innovation to deliver improved water quality and sustainable businesses
- Everyone is striving for the same outcomes - healthy landscapes and Reef, a strong and viable agriculture industry, and vibrant communities. We just believe that voluntary collaboration and co-operation will better achieve these outcomes than more heavy-handed legislation

What does AgForce want?

- The Government to support the uptake of voluntary standards (such as AgForce's Natural Capital Program), as the most effective and lowest cost way of improving farming practices and environmental outcomes not mandatory standards that stifle innovation and place unnecessary requirements on the majority of producers who are doing the right thing
- The government to recognise many more producers were at or above best practice before Reef funding programs commenced. The uptake of best practice is always under estimated in Reef Report Cards, as they only count producers involved in NRM grants and directly in contact with DAF extension officers
- The Government to consider new emerging Reef science before implementing ANY Reef regulations. For example, sediment tracing by James Cook University has confirmed that only the very fine suspended sediment makes it to the river deltas and inner shore reefs. New research has shown there are many sources of nitrogen, not just fertiliser or agricultural sources, for example from leaf and organic matter in waterways

What can I do to help?

- Attend the Reject the Reef Regs Rally in Townsville at 9.00am on Tuesday morning
- This meeting is our last chance to make the Government see that the deeply flawed and destructive Reef Protections Bill is not wanted by the Queensland community
- Sign the petition: farmers.org.au/campaign/rejecttheregs
- Visit the Stand Up for Regional Queensland site or send it to another farmer or city friend standupforqldag.org.au/join

