

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Great Barrier Reef
Date: Wednesday, 13 March 2019 10:44:40 PM

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I strongly support new laws to ban outdated polluting farm practices that are harming our Reef.

The reasons:

Climate change

Half the corals on the Great Barrier Reef were lost in back-to-back bleaching events of 2016 and 2017, driven by climate change. When water temperatures in the sea are too warm, corals expel algae that live in their tissues, causing them to turn white.

Though corals can survive bleaching events, the survivors become more vulnerable to crown of thorns starfish, disease and mortality.

Agricultural pollution

Farm pollution is one of the greatest blights on water quality... but how can farming practices have an impact on the Great Barrier Reef?

Chemical run-off from farming practices end up in the waters of the Reef. The pollution blocks sunlight and smothers corals and seagrass beds. Fertiliser run-off can also fuel algal blooms which overtake coral and drive crown of thorn starfish outbreaks.

Crown of thorns starfish

Algae that feeds off nitrogen run-off are the prime food source for juvenile crown of thorns starfish (*Acanthaster planci*). This allows large numbers of starfish to become adults, which then feed on coral and eat their way through huge sections on the outer Reef.

The fourth recorded outbreak of crown of thorns starfish is currently underway and is eating corals which survived recent bleaching events. By reducing fertiliser run-off, we can give our Reef the best chance for recovery.

The Great Barrier Reef is abundant with iconic marine life. It's within these amazing reef systems that incredible animals like sea turtles, whales and tropical fish travel and call home.

But the health of this important underwater ecosystem is under increasing threat. So I urge you to do all your best to save the Great Barrier Reef.

With hope,

Tanja Rieger
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