

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 - Fertilizer Australia Submission  
**Date:** Friday, 15 March 2019 1:23:12 PM

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**Attn to: Committee Secretary**  
**Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee**  
**Parliament House**  
**George Street**  
**Brisbane Qld 4000**

Dear Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee members,

**RE: Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, Submission from Fertilizer Australia.**

Fertilizer Australia Incorporated is the peak body for the Australian fertilizer industry. The members of Fertilizer Australia, collectively, account for 95% of the tonnes of fertilizer imported, manufactured and sold within Australia.

Our members are committed to codes of practice that, among other things, assist in protecting the environment from the misuse of fertilizers.

One of the tools that our members use, to protect the environment, is a training package called “**Fertcare®**”. Fertcare® provides knowledge on the appropriate use of fertilizer and the importance of well informed and educated advice from agronomists and sales representatives.

Due to the high (95%) representation within the Fertilizer Australia member companies, the Fertcare® program is unique and there is no equivalent anywhere in the Australian industry.

The legislation amendment targets the advice and reporting of agronomists and sales representatives but it doesn’t go far enough. The legislation amendment does nothing to improve the quality of advice and ensure that misleading advice is not provided. Ensuring the provision of high quality advice and the prevention of misleading advice, is proactive and will be far more effective in protecting the reef, than just having the ability to review the advice provided through the retention of sales and recommendation records.

Legislating the requirement for Fertcare® training and accreditation ensures the provision and documentation of quality advice, that balances production with the needs of the environment, food safety and user safety.

Furthermore, the Fertcare® training can be used by growers, ensuring that they understand the principles of efficient fertilizer usage and environmental protection. This submission, however, does not go as far as recommending that Fertcare training be made compulsory, for growers.

Six-Easy-Steps, developed by BSES/SRA, incorporates the principles of Fertcare® and was developed with input from Fertcare®. The requirement for this legislation amendment is an indication that Six-Easy-Steps, by itself, has not been effective in protecting the reef.

On a personal note, I am new to this role, spending the last 3 years working in the sugarcane industry. I fear that this legislation amendment has not gone far enough and will allow some of the better farmers to reduce their environmental practices, if they were to adhere to the legislation.

From this experience in the sugarcane industry, I know that this will be a difficult and contentious legislation amendment, as I understand the political might of Canegrowers.

However, if this amendment doesn't go far enough and has no effect on protecting the reef, more stringent amendments or new regulations will be required. Getting this legislation amendment right, the first time, will save time and money for both the government and the industry.

Where a respected, well utilised and effective tool, such as Fertcare®, exists, it is disappointing that the legislation amendments do not use this tool to effectively protect the reef. Other governments, such as Western Australia and New South Wales have been far more proactive in the use of Fertcare® in managing the use of fertilizer within their more sensitive catchment areas. Queensland's growers, agronomists and sales representatives lag well behind the rest of the states in adoption of Fertcare®. It is evident that this won't change without legislation.

This submission requests that Fertcare® training and accreditation be compulsory for those people who provide agronomic advice and sales recommendations to growers, within the great barrier reef catchment area and be included within the Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019.

I trust you can accept this format as a submission, unfortunately, my Board only just met yesterday and I wanted to advise them of the content of my submission prior to submitting it.

**Regards**

**Stephen Annells**

Executive Manager, Fertilizer Australia.

Registration No. A0025290C ABN 71 395 757 876 ARBN 106 743 015

Phone (02) 6273 2422



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