

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 622
Asked on Wednesday, 18 April 2007

MR HAYWARD asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

QUESTION:

How will the development of the 'Nutrient Management Zone Discussion Paper' by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries benefit the long term future of the Great Barrier Reef?

ANSWER:

Nutrient Management Zone (NMZ) identification and development of the Discussion Paper are part of the Queensland and Australian Government's commitment to the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. This Plan aims to halt and reverse the decline in water quality entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

The Discussion Paper examines options to better manage nutrients in intensive agriculture, particularly in Reef catchments.

NMZs are priority geographic areas for minimising nutrient run-off such as fertilisers and mill mud. The highest priority NMZs are located in the Wet Tropics, Mackay/Whitsunday and Burdekin Coastal catchments.

The objective of these zones will be to optimise nutrient use to meet crop needs, while minimising the risk of off site movement to the Great Barrier Reef.

Because of the diverse nature of agricultural industries in Reef catchments, the Discussion Paper proposes an industry-led, voluntary approach to nutrient management, with solutions tailored to each industry.

The two month public consultation period for the Discussion Paper concluded on 11 May 2007. Officers of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries will now work with industry and producers to set achievable targets for improved nutrient management and protection of the Reef.

By optimising fertiliser use across the catchments and industries we can ensure that producers benefit from cost savings and that the whole community benefits from improved water quality entering the Reef.