

Media release

More time to get ready for new Reef regulations

April 06 2020

The start date for regulating new or expanded cropping, horticulture and industrial activities in Reef catchments will be delayed to provide extra time for Queensland's farmers and other industries to prepare, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Queensland farmers and other industries in the Reef regions can continue to focus on their livelihoods, families and communities during these challenging times.

These requirements were developed to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution flowing to the Great Barrier Reef and while this is critical, it is recognised that there are other challenges facing our regional communities right now.

Under the deferred regulations, all new cropping and horticultural activities on five hectares or more in the Cape York, Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay Whitsunday, Fitzroy, and Burnett Mary regions would have required an environmental authority from 1 June 2020.

These requirements will now commence on 1 June 2021.

Additionally, from 1 December 2020 all new, expanded or intensified industrial activities such as sewage and water treatment plants, land-based aquaculture and mining, would have been required to meet new discharge standards to ensure no net increase in nutrient or sediment pollutant loads.

This requirement has also been deferred until 1 June 2021.

While formal consultation on draft standard conditions for the new cropping requirement is also on hold, the Department of Environment and Science will continue to work directly with stakeholders and industry bodies.

The Department of Environment and Science is reviewing the feedback it has already received and will continue to work on the draft standard conditions and other arrangements for new cropping and industrial activities.

This must be the right outcome for our farmers and industry as well as for the future of the Reef.

Submissions on the draft standard conditions can continue to be made by the public.

For more information on how to make a submission and the Reef protection regulations, visit www.qld.gov.au/ReefRegulations

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