

To all Queensland Farmers and their supporters

Right now, all regional Queenslanders are under threat from a man-made disaster in the form of a Reef Water Quality improvement Bill that the Queensland State Government in their wisdom has decided not to debate and pass during the August sittings of Parliament.

As farmers, or as people who rely on the Reef for their livelihoods, we love our reef; it is part of our lifestyle and culture. We need to live and work in harmony with the reef, based on quality economic and scientific evidence. Instead, the Bill, which builds on existing water quality laws, treats farmers like criminals with maximum penalties for breaches set to increase from \$13,345 up to \$222,194.

The Science keeps claiming, to the detriment of tourism and jobs, that the Reef is dying, coral cover is reducing and that farmers are killing the Reef with fertiliser, pesticide and sediment that runs off during natural flooding events. In our hearts and minds we know this not to be true, as does Dr Peter Ridd. His speaking tour, which began in Bundaberg on Monday 12 August and concluded in Cairns on Tuesday 20 August, has been examining these and other questionable scientific claims made in the *Scientific Consensus Statement 2017* which underpins the Bill, explaining his view of the reality and providing compelling evidence to support his view.

While this is fantastic news that the State Government has decided not to consider the Reef Water Quality improvement Bill in Parliament in August, at nearly every one of Dr Ridd's speaking engagements there has been a call for ongoing immediate action to further this notion of establishing an independent science checking body. Farmers United, intends to continue with the fight to ensure the Bill does not get passed in 2019 and in fact it aims to convince the State Government to **Defer the Bill** for a period of 2 years, to **Check the Science** through an independent body, the Office of Science Quality Assurance (OSQA) and to **STOP Harming the Farmers**. We must get this right so that we can help future generations. OSQA, will also serve to increase accountability of scientists, increase due diligence and help establish priorities for the Reef's protection.

The [OSQA proposal](#), with Peter's full endorsement, estimates the costs involved in checking the Science over the 2 year period to be around \$4.08 million (or only 1% of the \$440 million allocated to Reef Protection) and that these costs should be borne equally between the Commonwealth Government and taxpayers. If it was to be funded solely by one or the other, there would be distrust in the outcomes of the checking. For this reason, a Go Fund Me Campaign labelled [Checking the Science of the Great Barrier Reef](#) has been started seeking to raise \$2.1 million.

A [Farmers United](#) website has been established where all Queenslanders concerned about Farmers can show their concern by doing 1 of 3 things - send an email of support or providing their comments; signing a petition; or making a financial contribution toward the goal of raising \$2.1M. Did you know that if 8,400 Queenslanders contributed just \$250 each we would reach our target. It is important that we also get a large number of petitioners and donors as a sign of unity and of the importance of this issue to regional Queenslanders.

While Queensland Farmers have been given a reprieve - a stay of execution, it also signals that the State Government has heard the message loud and clear, for the moment, that the

Bill if introduced will lose them the next State Election. Surely, the State Government has learned its lesson following the Adani fiasco.

Farmers United also wishes to thank everyone for their support and contribution to date and hope you are able to find a spot in your hectic life and work schedules to provide further support including talking to everyone and anyone (family, relatives, friends, business owners) you can about this issue. You are also encouraged to send a letter to the Editor of your local newspaper and check deadlines in regional areas as they are sometimes a week in advance. You could also send to Farmers United any photos of the many beautiful reefs on the GBR with locations and dates noted, if possible, so that they can be posted to the website.

Please remember that our farmers help put food on everyone's table, every day.

On behalf of the Farmers United Team.