

Australia to dump sludge in Great Barrier Reef

4th February, 2014



Australia's government has approved a plan to dump massive amounts of sludge in the Great Barrier Reef. The mud will come from a project to

expand a coal port at Abbot Point, on the coast near the reef. The decision to give the go-ahead to the dumping of the sludge was made by Australia's Environment Minister in December. It has caused environmentalists to be up in arms about the possible damage to the world's largest and most famous coral reef. They say it is outrageous to put corporate profits ahead of such an important marine environment. About 3 million cubic meters of mud will be poured into the reef's waters. Authorities say the sludge will not be dumped on top of any coral.

The Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef system. It stretches for over 2,600 kilometres, covering an area of approximately 344,400 square kilometres. It receives special protection from Australia's government to limit the impact of fishing and tourism. Climate change is already damaging its delicate ecosystems by bleaching and killing the coral. The reef creates \$3 billion a year in tourism revenue. Greenpeace warned that the dumping, "is one more body blow for the Reef which further threatens marine life, its World Heritage status and Australia's tourism and fishing industries". The World Wildlife Fund said the decision marked, "a sad day for the reef and anyone who cares about its future".

Sources: CNN / Sydney Morning Herald / Wikipedia

Writing

Companies generally put the environment before profits. Do you agree? State why.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

approved / plan / project / Great Barrier Reef / environmentalists / up in arms / profits / system / protection / fishing / tourism / delicate / marine life / decision / sad day

True / False

- Australia's government wants to stop a mine putting mud in the reef. T / F
- Australia's Environment Minister approved the dumping plan. T / F
- Environmentalists are worried it will cost an arm and a leg. T / F
- Around 3 million cubic metres of sludge will be poured into the reef. T / F
- The reef covers an area of approximately 2,600 square kilometres. T / F
- The sun is already bleaching and killing coral. T / F
- The reef generates about \$3 million a year through tourism. T / F
- Greenpeace said the decision was a body blow for the reef. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. approved | a. green light |
| 2. expand | b. fragile |
| 3. go-ahead | c. spans |
| 4. up in arms | d. develop |
| 5. outrageous | e. OK'd |
| 6. stretches | f. endangers |
| 7. receives | g. shocking |
| 8. delicate | h. represented |
| 9. threatens | i. angry |
| 10. marked | j. get |

Discussion – Student A

- Why is it important to protect the Great Barrier Reef?
- What will the rest of the world think about Australia over this decision?
- Should all fishing and tourism be banned on the Great Barrier Reef?
- What do you know about the Great Barrier Reef?
- How likely is it that the dumpers know what they are doing?
- What message would you like to give Australia's Environment Minister?
- What do you think the future holds for the Great Barrier Reef?
- What questions would you like to ask Australia's Environment Minister?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. approved | a. be up in arms |
| 2. dump massive | b. 344,400 square km |
| 3. The decision to give | c. amounts of sludge |
| 4. It has caused environmentalists to | d. a sad day for the reef |
| 5. 3 million cubic | e. a plan |
| 6. approximately | f. delicate ecosystems |
| 7. limit the impact | g. meters of mud |
| 8. damaging its | h. blow for the Reef |
| 9. one more body | i. of fishing and tourism |
| 10. the decision marked | j. the go-ahead |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of the plan?
- Are you surprised Australia's government OK'd it?
- What damage do you think this sludge might cause?
- When was the last time you were up in arms about something?
- Are environmentalists right to be up in arms about this?
- Do you think profits are being put ahead of the environment?
- Do you believe the authorities who say sludge will not be dumped on top of any coral?
- Why dump in the Great Barrier Reef?

Spelling

- pardoepv a plan
- aeimssv amounts
- give the hd-oeaq
- an important ienmar environment
- About 3 million bcuic meters
- seArouthtii say the sludge will not be dumped
- yeatrapmixplo 344,400 square kilometres
- special ointteocrp
- eetdliac ecosystems
- \$3 billion a year in tourism eereunv
- its World tgaerHie status
- tourism and fishing istreuidns

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. d	3. a	4. i	5. g
6. c	7. j	8. b	9. f	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Marine biologist

You think a marine biologist is the best job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the least attractive of these (and why): a Greenpeace activist, an underwater photographer or a scuba-diving teacher.

Role B – Greenpeace activist

You think a Greenpeace activist is the best job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the least attractive of these (and why): a marine biologist, an underwater photographer or a scuba-diving teacher.

Role C – Underwater photographer

You think an underwater photographer is the best job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the least attractive of these (and why): a Greenpeace activist, a marine biologist or a scuba-diving teacher.

Role D – Scuba-diving teacher

You think a scuba-diving teacher is the best job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the least attractive of these (and why): a Greenpeace activist, an underwater photographer or a marine biologist.

Speaking – Reef jobs

Rank these and share with your partner. Put the most important jobs at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- fisherman
- marine biologist
- Greenpeace activist
- coal mine CEO
- scuba-diving teacher
- environmental scientist
- underwater photographer
- reef security

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.