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- [National News](#)
- [World News](#)
- [Sport](#)
- [Life & Style](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Whats On](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Tech](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Cars](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Dating](#)

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## One million megalitres of pollution hits Reef

January 23, 2009 - 9:29AM

Tougher regulations on farm chemicals are needed following rain that caused up to one million megalitres of pollution to spew onto the Great Barrier Reef, environmentalists say.

WWF reef spokesman Nick Heath said the organisation estimated enough polluted water to fill Sydney Harbour entered the reef after a monsoon brought drenching rain to north Queensland last week.

He said satellite imagery confirmed water flows travelled to mid-shelf reefs, causing algal blooms.

"If we are to give our iconic reef the best chance of withstanding climate change, we must ensure its water quality is as clean as possible," Mr Heath said.

"It is astounding what we are allowing to happen to the reef."

Premier Anna Bligh last year flagged farming regulation and penalties after years of voluntary efforts to help save the reef had not worked.

The announcement was unpopular with farmers but Ms Bligh said the reef would die if nothing was done.

A recent study showed more than 6.5 million tonnes of sediment was discharged into the reef in 2007 - four times higher than estimated pre-

European settlement levels.

It's estimated the reef injects \$6 billion into the tourism economy each year and provides about 65,000 jobs.

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