Reef protection regulations in the Great Barrier Reef regions
New or expanding cropping and horticulture activities (ERA 13A)

Checklist for when a permit is required
From the 1 June 2021, you must obtain a permit before you begin the commercial cropping or horticulture activity, including any preparatory works.

You will need a permit if you tick all the following:

The cropping or horticulture will:

☐ not be a closed system

☐ not be for the cultivation of trees in a state forest, timber reserve, forest consent area or forest entitlement area, or a forest practice

☐ not be on land where a development approval is in effect for high value agriculture clearing or irrigated high value agricultural clearing

☐ be for commercial purposes i.e. carried out for a fee or reward

☐ be on at least five hectares of land within the same river basin within the Great Barrier Reef catchment

Use the online form at www.qld.gov.au/environment/agriculture/sustainable-farming/reef/reef-regulations/regions/reef-regulations-map to find out if your land is in the Great Barrier Reef catchment, and which river basin it is in.

☐ be on land that:
  ○ does not have a cropping history i.e. the land was used for cropping or horticulture, either commercially or non-commercially, in less than three of the last ten years before the activity is due to start
  OR
  was not cropped, either commercially or non-commercially and including preparatory work, at least once during 1 June 2018 to 31 May 2021.

1 A closed system is where fine sediment or dissolved inorganic nitrogen is never released to land, or into water, in the Great Barrier Reef catchment e.g. hydroponics grown in a greenhouse where all the water is recycled on site.

2 See the Forestry Act 1959 for the meaning of State forest, timber reserve or forest consent area. See the Land Act 1994 for the meaning of a forest entitlement area. See the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for the meaning of a forest practice.

3 Preparatory work: Means work, other than building work, plumbing work or drainage work, carried out to prepare land for the activity, including, for example:
  (a) excavating or filling the land, or
  (b) clearing or destroying vegetation on the land, or
  (c) ploughing the land, or otherwise preparing soil on the land for planting, or
  (d) other work in, on, over or under the land that materially affects the land or its use.

4 From the 1 June 2026, a permit will be required if the land does not have a cropping history.