

### Worksheet 2

#### TEACHER'S NOTES

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".