

Great Barrier Reef will be annihilated: report

Friday December 14, 2007



By ninemsn staff with wires

The Great Barrier Reef will inevitably turn into an "eroding rubble bank" and any action to reduce greenhouse gases will prove futile, an environmental analysis report says.

Marine scientists have predicted a "terrible future in front of us for reefs" in the paper published today in the journal *Science*.

The paper presents three possible scenarios for the future of coral reefs under different climate conditions.

If current trends continue, with temperatures and greenhouse emissions of 380 parts per million (ppm) stabilising, the reefs will survive but be changed dramatically.

But if emissions rise to between 450 and 500ppm, with an estimated temperature spike of around two degrees by 2050, the reefs will suffer "vastly reduced habitat complexity and loss of biodiversity".

ADVERTISEMENT

Anything over 500ppm — which the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has said will be the minimum rise — will result in the reef's annihilation.

Coral beds will become nothing more than "rapidly eroding rubble banks".

The reefs as we know them today will become "extremely rare" as the ecosystems morph into "crumbling frameworks with few calcareous corals".

Scientists determined that current carbon monoxide levels in the earth's atmosphere are 380ppm — 80ppm higher than levels 740,000 years ago, and perhaps as high as they have been for 20 million years.

Meanwhile reports say there has been little progress at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, which new Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is attending.

Mr Rudd was applauded when he announced the ratification to environment ministers or their representatives from some 180 nations.

But the European Union has [criticised Australia](#) over its apparent ambiguity in the key United Nations talks underway in Bali.

Negotiations are intensifying as nations try to reach agreement on a Bali roadmap to pave the way for a future global pact to fight climate change in two years time.

A key sticking point has been whether or not to include a non-binding guideline that rich countries aim to slash global greenhouse gas emissions by 25 to 40 percent on 1990 levels by 2020.

The European Union said it would be "meaningless" to attend climate meetings hosted by the United States if UN talks in Bali seeking to launch talks on a new climate pact ended in failure.

"It's true that if we would have a failure in Bali it would be meaningless to have a major economies' meeting" in the United States, Humberto Rosa, Portugal's Secretary of State for Environment, told a news conference on the penultimate day of the talks.

