



**Save the Mary River Coordinating Group**

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Research Director  
Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Email: [aec@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:aec@parliament.qld.gov.au)

30 March 2016

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

**Re: Submission to the proposed legislative amendments proposed in the *Environmental Protection (Chain of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2016***

The Save the Mary River Coordinating Group Inc (STMRCG) is a community based group whose members are dedicated to protecting and preserving the Mary River in its natural state. It has members from a wide range of professional backgrounds including expertise relevant to the issues required to be addressed in this submission.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment and please accept this as a submission to the proposed legislative amendments proposed in the Environmental Protection (Chain of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2016.

We support the proposed legislative amendments proposed in the *Environmental Protection (Chain of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2016* for the following reasons:

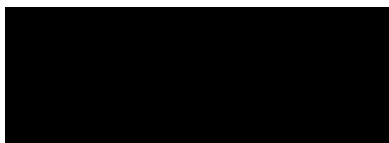
- We are concerned as Queensland taxpayers at the extent of abandoned mines and minerals processing facilities that number in excess of 15,000 sites across the states.
- We note that in the past 12 months, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection has confronted increasing difficulties in ensuring that sites operated by companies in financial difficulty continue to comply with their environmental obligations. This has included sites such as the Yabulu Nickel Refinery, Texas Silver Mine, Collingwood Tin Mine and Mount Chalmers Gold Mine. There needs to be stronger laws to ensure compliance to approval conditions.
- Currently there is a proposal to establish the Colton Mine at Aldershot which plans to

discharge polluted water to the Mary River. Also there is a large area of the Mary River catchment that has coal exploration permits granted. We are against any of these developments of coal or coal seam gas extraction. There is early evidence showing that the development of underground coal gasification and the roll out of unconventional gas (including Coal Seam Gas and Shale Gas) over thousands of square kilometers of Queensland has the potential for huge environmental damage.

- Companies financial assurance or environmental insurance are unlikely to cover the extent of the damage when things go wrong with mining and unconventional gas. Pollution of aquifers, “make good” arrangements for affected landholders, soil contamination are extremely difficult and expensive to fix and rehabilitation.
- We believe that the *Environmental Protection (Chain of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2016* is necessary and urgent given that many mining and unconventional gas companies are facing financial pressure and risk going into administration.
- Companies must be held to account in regards to preventing and cleaning up environmental impacts. The industry has a poor environmental record in Queensland.
- The legislation needs to mandate extending the responsibility to cleaning up environmental impacts to all mineral processing facilities in the State, and
- We support the “polluter pays” principle where those that profit from exploiting the mineral resources which are owned by the people of Queensland leave their sites in a condition without residual environmental impacts. Leaving “hugh holes” that interfere with groundwater aquifers is not rehabilitation. Approval conditions must include mine closure plans to be developed and provisions made right from the start of mining/processing. This will force companies to plan better to reduce environmental impacts and look for opportunities to backfill extraction holes with overburden.

Finally, if any part of this submission is unclear, please contact the undersigned.

Yours Sincerely,  
Glenda Pickersgill



*President*  
*Save the Mary River Coordinating Group Inc.*

