



Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

1st October, 2016

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*RE: Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and
other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 (EPOLA)*

Please accept this submission on the above EPOLA Bill submitted by the
Environment Council of Central Queensland (ECoCeQ).

ECoCeQ supports the passage of the Bill with the associated
Underground Water Management amendment because it:

- will provide better scrutiny of groundwater taken by resource companies over time
- will strengthen the initial groundwater assessment for mines under the Environmental Protection Act 1994
- will require mines that are already advanced in mining and tenure approvals (Carmichael mine, Acland) to obtain an 'Associated Water Licence' that will:
 - provide a transparent process for decision-making
 - require public notification and allowing public submissions on underground water impacts associated with these projects
 - ensure that a decision-maker could refuse an application if the underground water take associated with the project is found to have unacceptable impacts on the environment or other water users

- provide an opportunity for a merit-based appeal by third parties

However, we are concerned that the amendments do not go far enough.

The Bill should:

- consider the Principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) on all Water Licences and 'Associated Water Licences' for resource companies (Mining and Gas), and apply the Precautionary Principle
- consider assessment of water impacts during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) stage of an application for an Environmental Authority (EA) for a mine or gas project.
- consider the cumulative impacts of resource developments (Mining and Gas) on underground and surface water supply including contamination and depletion

Failure to include these amendments leaves a relatively weak Bill, which may still foster loss of biodiversity, and disruption and insult to ecosystems and landholders, with consequent burden for future generations.

Christine Carlisle
President
Environment Council of Central Queensland

