

From:

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To:

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**Submission on Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other
Legislation Amendment Bill 2016**

As a former grazier for over 25 years and my continued involvement in and passion for the agricultural industry and rural and regional communities through my children, grandchildren and work, I support the overall intent of this Bill.

However - I do think there should be provisions within the Bill's transitional arrangements for resource projects well advanced in their approvals processes which have been inadvertently (or perhaps even intentionally?) at the eleventh hour, captured by it.

One such project is the New Acland Stage 3 continuation project on the Darling Downs.

Apart from being a shining example of how agriculture and mining can co-exist with the progressive rehabilitation practices it employs, the current mine currently employs several hundred LOCAL people - landholders, farmers, graziers, small business owners who are able to live, work and play, are a part of, and contribute to, the local community – because of the mine.

This particular project has been through almost ten years of approval processes jumping through every single hurdle in that process thrown at it by no less than four different State governments in that time. Today, in fact, a marathon 31 week land court hearing process has just completed in which groundwater was a major focus. Two weeks alone were entirely devoted to discussion on groundwater impacts by experts from both sides – proponents and objectors.

This project is running out of resource. In 2018 resource in the current mining lease will be exhausted. Hence why an affidavit of urgency was put by the company before the Land Court.

Without approvals by early next year – people will start to lose their jobs.

Should amendments not be made to this Bill the project would have to go through another approvals process (which could take up to another two years) duplicating exactly what has just been examined thoroughly in the land court. This would be a gross waste of tax payer's money (including mine) and further clog an already clogged court system.

More critically however, and my biggest concern, is for the hundreds of farmers, landholders and small businesses whose livelihoods depend on the mine's continuation. Those, who were the victims of dairy deregulation years ago, were only able to remain on their properties because the mine offered them off farm income.

Job losses would not only be confined to the local area. It would have job loss consequences for workers in ancillary services such as rail and port operations and associated management and administrative services.

The irony of this Bill capturing this project in particular is that the New Acland mine (and stage 3 of it) doesn't and won't use underground water for its operations. It uses the recycled water it pays for and pipes from Toowoomba's recycled water plant.

This water is then reticulated over and over, reused and reused.

Additionally, the mine has been in operation now since 2002 with no impact on underground water.

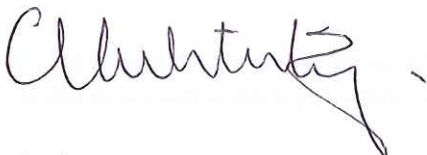
Surely this alone is demonstration of why it shouldn't be caught by the new legislation.

Further - I've seen firsthand the rehabilitation practices the company employs for its current mining operations. Seeing is believing and I challenge anyone who has not already seen this project first hand to do so before forming an opinion. Make an informed opinion.

Its first class, has won a National Award for sustainability and quite frankly – the practices that New Hope employ for rehabilitation – progressive rehabilitation - should be mandatory for all mining companies.

I implore the committee to recommend that appropriate amendments be made to the Bill for transitional arrangements which would preserve the intent of the Bill, exempt New Acland Stage 3 and ensure jobs and livelihoods aren't lost.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C Uechtritz', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

C Uechtritz