

SUBMISSION FOR:

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

---

Objectives:

1. *"strengthen the effectiveness of the environmental assessment of underground water extraction by resource projects"*

New Hope Group at the New Acland site does not draw upon the underground water to run their Coal Operations. The water used by the mine site comes directly from the Toowoomba Region Waste Water Treatment plant at Wutulla at a considerable cost regardless of how much is used. The local authorities acknowledge that this arrangement is of considerable benefit to Toowoomba Regional Council. This mine site is considered a dry pit as opposed to other mines in the country, so I fail to see why the objectors are placing emphasis on ground water. There are four objectors living close to mine whose water, in the last 14 years of mining, must not have been an issue as I'm sure I would have heard about it in the media. **The climate, condition of and age of the bore control the levels of the bores, not the mine.** There are around 20 miners who live on farms closer or similar distances from the mine, whose bores have not been impacted; multiply that by the neighbours of these workers whose water has also not been impacted.

2. *"allow the ongoing scrutiny of the environmental impacts of underground water extraction during the operational phase of resource projects through clearer links between the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and Water Act 2000 allow the ongoing scrutiny of the environmental impacts of underground water extraction during the operational phase of resource projects through clearer links between the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and Water Act 2000"*

Please judge us on our own merits and not the practices of other resource companies. We abide by the Environmental Protection Act and Water Act that governs our monitoring and reporting on a regular basis. Our rehabilitation practices are world class and we are returning land to grazing that is in better condition than when we purchased it as a non-sustainable dairy farm after the introduction of dairy deregulation.

3. *"improve the make good framework in the Water Act 2000"*

New Hope already offer 'Make Good' agreements and like most agreements they evolve over time. This is no reason to hold up the approval process for the extension that New Acland is seeking.

4. *"ensure that the administering authority for the Environmental Protection Act 1994 is the decision-maker for specific applications relating to environmental authorities"*

Acts are being amended continually as social and economic conditions determine. This should not have any impact on approval processes for resources companies. We have been through more than one EIS process, countless public submission and land court covering nearly a ten

SUBMISSION FOR:

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

---

year period. It is outrageous that this amendment is being developed to hinder the economic progress of this area when New Acland Coal is already employing excellent environmental practices that support the Environmental Protection Act.

5. *"ensure the impacts of mining projects that are advanced in their environmental and mining tenure approvals are appropriately assessed for their impact on the environment and underground water users and opportunities for public submissions and third party appeals are provided before underground water is taken in a regulated area for mine dewatering purposes"*

New Acland mining application has been assessed and re-assessed multiple times over a 10 year period. There have been multiple opportunities for public submissions at the start, during and after the multiple stages of the process. A very long land court process has also been undertaken, thus providing more scrutinizing of our activities. Further assessments and appeals are just a delaying tactic to draw out the approval process so that the mine runs out of coal and will have to close up. This region cannot afford to lose an industry that supports and sustains it to the degree that New Acland Mine employs.

6. *"update existing provisions in the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 to provide for the appointment, by local government, of authorised persons to carry out compliance and enforcement activities for the local heritage provisions."*

Yet again, these actions can be amended, independently of granting leases. The strong submission process already in place will identify any areas of concern and can be addressed during them.

Closing:

I understand the need for laws to ensure resource companies remain environmentally good corporate citizens. Other companies have their own methods of operation, but New Hope Group's history has already demonstrated that they are exceptionally good corporate citizens by:

- Industry leading rehabilitation programme for returning mined land to agricultural use. (The large solar farms being planned on prime farming land – better land than what is being mined - sadly won't be used to grow cereal crops again.)
- Continuing to consult all stakeholders and maintain a supportive role within the district.
- Holding a good neighbourly relationship with the MAJORITY of the district. A noisy FEW do not hold the views of the MAJORITY of the Acland, Oakey and Dalby communities.
- Monitoring, Reporting and corporately upholding the relative Acts governing the Mine Site.

This amendment was designed as a delaying tactic for granting a decision for our Mining Lease extension. 275 employees, 507 contractors and 2,300 indirect jobs, will be lost if this extension is not approved within a couple of months and that will devastate this district. Unemployment will rise; businesses will close; there will be \$100m missing from the Darling Downs area. There is no other business that will be stepping up and replacing New Acland as a sustainer of our local

**SUBMISSION FOR:**

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

---

economy. This Bill amendment is a ploy to engage delaying tactics and should be vehemently dismissed.

I am a local landholder and from personal discussions with other businesses and landholders in the area, I feel that the majority of our district supports the expansion of the mine. We are weary of hearing from the same FEW objectors, with the same few illogical arguments and false implications.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016



Cathy Wood

