

To the Agriculture and Environment Parliamentary Committee,

I am sending this submission just prior to 4pm Qld time.

Submission for the EPOLA bill.

Please do what you can to end the statutory right of fossil fuel companies to have unlimited access to ground water supplies, and tighten up the regulation and protection of water in this bill. Mining companies do not merit such a privilege or continuing political/legal support because:

- 1) Fossil fuel companies take the water clean and deliver it back to the environment mildly or seriously toxic. A single gas company frack can take 10 million litres of great water, and turn it into salty poison, (as well as the myriad of other problems such as fugitive emissions etc, etc, etc).
- 2) Unlimited free withdrawal rights lowers the water table beyond the recharge rate. This is problematic for other users and for the environment that sustains us all.
- 3) The 'free ride' that companies are getting is neither just or sensible when farmers and other landholders are required to go through the water licence assessment process. There is nothing, beyond the powerful interests of a few, who can possibly argue that the fossil fuel industry merits an exception, especially when they are such huge takers and polluters.
- 4) Unrestricted water rights do not factor in environmental cost and water loss for future generations. Such an exception skews the market and delays the introduction of alternative and sustainable means of energy and job creation. Therefore we are holding up the progress towards a liveable present and future, while many claim that it has to be so as we are dependent. For example there are even advances now beyond concentrated solar thermal in salt towers? How long do we have to wait for it to be profitable in this country when the fossil fuel industry gets environmental and other subsidies?
- 5) Indulging dependency never helped any kind of substance abuse addict. Eventually they have to stop whatever it is that is making

them ill. It is no excuse to say for example that we have a gas contract with China, and a giant pipeline and a new port - so have to supply and enable beyond all reasons of supporting life - those that are doing this. Akin to enabling drug pushers to supply.

The Environmentally Sustainable Development principles need to be reinstated in this bill. Especially the precautionary principle.

- 6) The ESD principles need to be written into this bill, unambiguously and with 'teeth'. IE, not just as 'window dressing' or 'green-washing', but with accountability and tangible consequences. That includes;
- 7) Full disclosure/transparency of all chemicals and other processes that impact on water.
- 8) Massive fines for non-compliance and CEO prison sentences.
- 9) The initial ground water assessment for mines needs to be competently done by an independent agency. At the moment mining companies are granted leases over land and begin promoting mining projects without hydrology reports being done. Shareholder investment is sought without this in hand. Proposed mines have negative effects on real estate values and social values in the neighbourhood. Especially now that the mining boom has ended and there aren't necessarily jobs for the locals. For example, the Kingaroy 'coal mine' site is downhill of an area of springs and close to the surface ground water. This would flood a mine on the proposed site. Shareholders are none the wiser on this and other points but the community is greatly disturbed in the meantime.
- 10) Much better monitoring during any mining operations. There needs to be constant monitoring of ground water once a new project is underway and for the mines already in operation.
- 11) More than adequate reparations and restoration – in so far as that is even possible given the nature of water flow, toxicity and recharge rates. There need to be minimum standards for reparations and HUGE consequences for those at the top of mining companies for getting risky ventures wrong.

- 12) The later made at the cost of the companies themselves, not the land owner or tax payer. There also needs to be an insurance or bond paid by any fossil fuel company that wants to do a project – so that this money is there up front as an incentive to do the right thing, and not leave it ruined and or get off free claiming bankruptcy etc. This additionally would help stop the skewing of the market in favour of fossil fuel companies and requires them to pay true cost. It would factor in the precautionary principle.
- 13) **All potential projects need to be assessed on the cumulative impact of drawing water and polluting water, not just on a one off individual basis.**
- 14) There needs to be some kind of independent arbitration agency/process that makes it quicker, easier and cheaper for the public to lay complaints and gain redress.
- 15) **Transitional mines need to get an associated water license with the ESD provisions (with teeth) that I have described above.**

In conclusion;

-There is no such thing as ‘unlimited water ‘to be squandered on anything at all short term, unsustainableand in some ways of looking at it, unethical.

-The transition to alternatives will not occur fast enough to stem climate change, when the subsidisation and lack of true cost accounting skews the market.

-When it comes to the disposal of contaminated water “*there is no such thing as ‘away’*”. Tailings dams are a joke –when they release their toxicity into the air, and overflow in flood. Spraying CSG produced water on the ground to wet the dust equally not dealt with effectively and ‘away’.

-Water will flow to where it flows to – ie., aquifer science is not definitive but guess work.

- The people who most of us (non- psychopathic individuals) admire in history are those who suffered for something that was ahead of its time and 'right'. Prison, job loss, loss of career advancement, financial loss and stigmatisation from a peer group are all consequences of not being a 'yes person' in the status quo. "We have to keep on with slavery or the economy would collapse". "We men can't give rights to women as they possess inferior brains".

Then with people making individual stands, standing up to their peers, finding their voice, the new 'impossible thing' catches on. (In this case you who have the power to end the environmental and financial subsidy to mining companies). Those who went early are the ones we most thank and make movies about! If you can find it in yourself to be that person, be those people, then thank you in advance.

I write this as a wife, mother and grandmother, and pretty much nobody important in the scheme of things.

Ella Linwood

