

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: URGENT submission - resent as phone no. missing earlier
Date: Friday, 7 October 2016 2:00:05 PM

To the Agriculture and Environment Parliamentary Committee

Please accept this as a submission to the *Environment Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 (EPOLA)*.

All moves to protect precious groundwater supplies should be applauded.

If the major amendment described below is made, I would support the passage of the EPOLA Bill (and the associated Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2015) because it will result in improved protections for groundwater resources over Newman era water laws.

In particular, the EPOLA Bill includes positive provisions that will:

- Require 'transitional' mines to obtain an 'associated water licence' (ie Acland and Carmichael coal mines)
- Strengthen the initial groundwater assessment for mines under the Environmental Protection Act 1994
- Allow better ongoing scrutiny of the impacts of mining on groundwater over time
- Improve the make good agreement framework slightly in favour of landholders

However, despite the Bills improving on Newman era laws, they still ultimately represent a weak system that will provide new mine proposals in the future with unlimited legal rights to access to associated groundwater.

This will impact negatively on other water users, agriculture and the environment, and will weaken the powers of the Land Court. Farming in this State is already under threat. It is very disappointing that the Bills do not go further to protect groundwater.

The main amendment that I believe is needed to EPOLA is to require any grant of an 'associated water licence' to be assessed against the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development. Without this amendment, the Bill will provide only a very weak water licensing process for mines like Acland and Carmichael.

Other amendments that should also be made include:

- A requirement that resource companies must pay for all bore related expert

assessments for 'make good agreements' for aquifer damage

- A requirement for upfront consideration of the cumulative impacts of proposed mining developments
- An independent Make Good Commissioner to adjudicate disputes
- Minimum standards and apply a Code of Conduct for make good agreements

I trust that as responsible Committee members, you will make the correct decisions in the best interests of the people, the environment and the State of Queensland and not short-term profit taking mining interests.

Yours faithfully

Katherine Beddoes-Eagles

