

Mr Matthew Busch



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Parliament House
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Submission on the Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

I would like to start by thanking the government for their ongoing dedication to ensuring that companies that operate in this great State do so in an environmentally and socially responsible way. To that end, I am supportive of the intent of the proposed legislation, although I believe that the Bill needs to include better transitional arrangements for projects currently in the latter stages of the approval process.

One such project is the New Acland Coal Stage 3 expansion project. This project has been scrutinised under various Governments and processes for almost 10 years and has most recently completed a lengthy and comprehensive Land Court process. During that time there has been full and comprehensive opportunity for any interested party to raise concerns with the project and to have those concerns considered by the Government, their departments and finally the Land Court.

This lengthy approval process has now reached the point where there is a real risk that approvals will not be received in time in order to provide continuity between Stage 2 and Stage 3 operations. Any further delays are likely to result in the loss of hundreds of jobs. These jobs include jobs directly at the mine site, contractor's dependent upon the mine site for the majority of their work, rail employees, port employees, head office employees and more.

In addition to job losses, there would also be a significant impact on the local economy as the financial contribution from the mine itself, and it's locally residing workforce represent a significant financial contribution to the local area. The flow on impact from the loss of this financial contribution to schools, local business, local community groups and others would represent a significant loss to the local community.

The current approvals process has not only rigorously addressed the intended scope of the new legislation, but every member of the community has had full and unrestricted access to raise concerns through public comment, and to have those concerns fully considered and documented via an objection in the Land Court.

To subject such projects to further approvals processes will only add further delay and will not result in the identification of new issues nor will it deliver improved environmental and social outcomes. In fact, given the job losses associated with further delays, to subject the project to additional delays at this time would actually result in significantly negative social outcomes. It would also needlessly tie up Government departments and the Land Court by needlessly reconsidering the same issues that have already been rigorously and fully assessed in the approvals process to date.

In closing I would like to thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. I trust that in the best interests of all Queenslanders that the Bill will be amended to include appropriate transitional provisions for projects in the final stages of the approvals process. This will ensure that Queensland operations continue to operate in a socially and environmentally responsible way, without jeopardising the financial benefit that these projects provide to Queensland.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Matthew Busch', with a stylized, flowing script.

Matthew Busch