

Roslyn Blackwood,



56th October, 2016

Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
Sent via email only: aec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

Re: Submission to Committee on Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to your inquiry into the Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 (**Bill**).

As guided by the Environmental Defenders Office I am simply following the accessible path they provide through a summary template such as this to tell you I am a private citizen who regularly attempts to have a say in the way our now sold away country, and equally so our state of Queensland, is continuing to be abandoned to those who would rape it. In late 2014 I wanted to stand up and say “What are you doing?” when I was alerted to the uncomprehensible, yes I mean un-comprehensible, and massive reformulating of the legislation of water protection in Queensland all toward the fast tracking by the then government for gifting massive access to water with no hindrance to those of foreign and even local ownership persuasion who rip out and, resultantly, leave damaged. I did not and do not have the capacity to do the accessing, the analyzing, the sophisticated counter arguing to such a dreadfully detailed but surgically precise emasculating of the then legislation on water protection to suit, very comfortably, resource companies. Willingly you nurture these companies who submit plans for further landscape gouging and subterranean interfering and as in the past I am again saddened by the impotence of us the watchers from afar of the corruption and manipulation by the state government, we can hardly comprehend as new laws are sorceried up in now the Labor government’s coven.

Now with EDO’s help I again scream and plead with the recipients of this submission that you are guilty of ruthlessly duplicating the permanent wasting and ruining of our commonwealth of interconnected complexity of nature in Queensland through making a farce of the role of stewardship as was the case with the LNP pre January 2015. We foolishly thought you cared as the decision making changed to your say, but in reality were duped you would take responsibility for stopping the risks of damage to our ground water and to so much of our natural beauty, our natural store of the remaining ecological balance that are essential components for viability of the living population in the landscape, the non human creatures and the human creatures.

Having stated as an introduction of myself my despair of the puppetry I go on to simply write word for word the clear explanation provided by the professional skill of the specialists in analysis of the ramifications of your intent in the above infamy. I understand what this legal team have distilled from the intended legislation, the result of harm for my state and the long term consequences of a lack of precautionary principles in your eagerness to smooth the way for those eager to get on with Galilee Basin destruction.

Living as I do at the above address and living in the last few years for periods closer to the central part of the Queensland coast I bring to your attention:

- the rapid loss of control of the processes of degradation of the coastal waterways from projects such as the Gladstone gas port expansion
- the change to the landscape and quality of air and lifestyle of those near the Hay Point terminal at Mackay as the result of it becoming a coal port
- the current ongoing battle for adequate compensation from the Chinese government over the grounding upon the reef of a coal carrier a few years ago

as examples where no precaution for care is a consistent legislative central feature, but on the contrary the rule is so belligerently biased against the constituency of the state, the majority, in favour of a powerful avaricious few, though we that constituency are left with the legacy of the carelessness.

Further:

- the consequences of no precautionary long term data collection in regions where wells for accessing coal seam gas has led to proven ground water loss and contamination
- the well publicised social fall out of the George Bender family's continuing objection to the lack of adequate protection of rights to refuse resource miners access on private land

are examples again of the culpability of past state governments in gaining numbers of dollars, often disproportionately small numbers of currency units into the revenue stream with a blind indifference to what is left to us, the so often "problematic" short term tenants, with no rights and less and less rights in law irrespective of the growing evidence of the likeness to vandalism of Queensland that the big boom opportunities in reality are.

I readily see that there is only moonscape ahead on the surface at the open cut coal face and unknown depletion and even possibly degradation of residual underground water when there is no provision in the legislation to guarantee beyond any concern that no permanent damage will result from dismissal of the potential for irreversible consequences by mining sector self management in the Galilee Basin region.

So as has been stated to me here I also refer you to this word for word explanation by the Environmental Defenders Office in their 4 key points:

- 1) **No resource company should get free, unlimited access to groundwater when extracting coal or gas, because it is risky to the environment and risky and unfair to other water users such as farmers.** The current laws giving such rights to gas companies ought to be changed. The plans of the current and former State governments to create a 'statutory right to take associated groundwater' for mining companies need to be rejected for the same reasons. For openness, transparency and accountability, a licence should always be required prior to groundwater being taken or interfered with, with public submission and appeal rights to an independent Court with powers of final determination.
- 2) **The improvements proposed in the Bill by the current State government to the groundwater impact assessment for projects at the environmental authority stage are good, necessary and supported.** Those improvements include a requirement for the applicant to provide more information as to the proposed impacts from their use of underground water, including detailing each aquifer likely to be affected and analysis of those aquifers, impacts on the quality of underground water, and identification of the environmental values that will or may be affected and proposed strategies to avoid or mitigate these impacts. Functional, clean groundwater resources are essential to many Qld farmers, businesses and ecosystems.
- 3) **The current government's proposal that mines obtain an 'associated water licence' if they have not gone through the improved groundwater impact assessment introduced by the Bill is positive.** This would mean the public submission and appeal rights would continue to apply to large, risky coal mines like Adani Carmichael and Hancock Alpha coal mines. Those

proposed mines pose serious potential groundwater impacts that might affect natural areas and landholders who depend on groundwater. However, see above, licensing ought to be required in relation to all mining and gas projects not just older proposals. Also, see below, the licensing needs to be assessed against ESD principles.

- 4) **The Bill needs to be amended so that the ‘associated water licence’ is assessed against the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD principles) as necessary for every other water licence assessment.** ESD principles include the precautionary principle –in effect that if we do not understand the likely results of the proposed impacts sufficiently, we should not allow the activity to be undertaken. Current legislation in force does require assessment against ESD principles as part of all water license assessment. The effects of impacts to our groundwater basins are often uncertain, and must be assessed against the ESD principles.

I would like the opportunity to appear before the Committee in their hearing into this inquiry.

Yours sincerely in mistrust of our future as we confidently stroke the hand of the crumb distributors.

Mrs Roslyn Blackwood