



21 March 2014

The Research Director
 Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee
 Parliament House
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CCAA SUBMISSION – ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSETS BILL 2014

Cement, Concrete and Aggregates Australia (CCAA) is the peak industry body representing the \$7 billion-a-year heavy construction materials industry in Australia. Our members are involved in the extraction and processing of quarry products, as well as the production and supply of cement, pre-mixed concrete and supplementary materials. We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee in relation to the *Environmental Offsets Bill 2014* (the Bill), particularly in relation to the extractive industry.

CCAA is very supportive of the Queensland Government's effort to facilitate a coordinated offsets framework to reduce green tape, remove inconsistency between specific-issue offset policies, remove duplication of environmental assessments, and provide for strategic offset delivery. The current environmental offset policy is complex, and the management of offsets represents a significant regulatory burden on industry, leading to significant costs and delays to project development, without any significant environmental benefit. CCAA supports the reduction of the complexities of managing the current five existing policies, and a clearer and simpler environmental offsets framework.

In addition, CCAA believes that the Bill's objective of removing duplication of environmental assessment by separate levels of Government - through mandating that there will be only one offset for the same matter for the one activity - has the potential to provide for a more effective system. CCAA is also supportive of the provision of a one-stop-shop to assess matters on behalf of the Commonwealth. However, CCAA notes that consideration needs to be given to the potential for the Commonwealth, and possibly Local Government to still require an offset for different prescribed environmental matters, which may result in duplication of offset requirements.

CCAA also supports, in principle, the ability to apply offsets only where significant impacts to a matter of environmental significance will occur, however, notes that further clarification is required on the definition of "significant". The replacement of the five current offset policies through the introduction of a single policy is also considered positive by the heavy construction materials industry. CCAA notes that on 17 March, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) released the draft Queensland Environmental Offsets Policy which provides details on offset delivery options, timing of offsets, and financial payments, however, further information is required on the implementation of the policy, and any subsequent legislative provisions.

CCAA is also supportive, in principle, of the Bill's aim to provide clearer obligations and simpler assessment of the environmental matters requiring an offset, as well as how the Bill aims to preclude the creation of further specific-issue environmental offset policies, which has the potential to provide higher levels of certainty for the extractive industry. CCAA also supports the flexibility within the Bill for members to provide their own environmental offsets, as well as the opportunity for landholders to receive income in return for voluntarily agreeing to manage their land, or part of their land as an offset.



CCAA is supportive of the introduction of strategic offset delivery including the provision of a number of options to choose when delivering environmental offsets including financial settlements, proponent-driven offsets, or a combination of both. CCAA notes that it is crucial that the Bill, and subsequent supporting regulations and policies, give strong consideration to the unique nature of the extractive industry – that is - the use of land for extractive industry is a gradual process which involves quarrying only part of the land at any given point and progressively expands to the balance of the relevant land. CCAA notes that it is therefore vital that there is the ability to provide offsets in advance, as multiple phases, as well as provide for staged clearing. In relation to the provision of financial settlement, CCAA notes that further details are required regarding this option, however, we strongly believe that any financial calculation must be clear, transparent, equitable and proportionate.

Once again, CCAA thanks you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *Environmental Offsets Bill 2014*. In general, CCAA is supportive of the Bill, however, notes that further details are required as to how the offset framework will be implemented, including any subsequent legislation provisions. To further discuss any of the issues raised in the submission, please contact me on 3227 5210 or aaron.johnstone@cca.com.au

Yours sincerely



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