

Comments on the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

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Submission to :

The Research Director
Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee
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These brief comments are based on my considerable experience with water quality sampling and reporting on behalf of the Condamine Balonne Water Committee. The CBWC has been involved with regular water quality monitoring in the Condamine Balonne river system annually from 1993 to the present day, with extensions to new projects in recent years. We have seen increasingly dwindling water supplies and increasing periods of no flow within the river systems.

As the drought continues and urban expansion in the Toowoomba area continues, it becomes critically important to conserve underground water resources for the survival of agriculture and urban populations in future. The Bill, instead, allows mining and CSG companies almost unfettered access to water resources (at a time when increasing restrictions on water use are being applied to irrigators). Future consequences, and the impossibility of "make good" provisions when water reserves are depleted and bores dry up, have been totally ignored.

Therefore I cannot support the *Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014*.

Moreover, I and the CBWC have a close working relationship with the Queensland Murray Darling Committee based in Toowoomba. I have studied and heartily endorse the key issues highlighted in the QMDC comments, namely :-

- Poor assessment and monitoring processes
- Lack of independent assessment of large scale projects
- The deregulation of water use especially in light of cumulative impacts of increased development and climate variability
- Weakening of mining water use regulation
- Incompatibility of objectives contained within the Bill
- The removal of 'ecologically sustainable development' as one of the purposes of the Act.

Yours sincerely,

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Agricultural Chemist