

Carolyn Heffernan

From: Margaret Airoidi [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 8 August 2012 2:40 PM
To: Agriculture Resources and Environment Committee
Subject: Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill 2012

Dear Rob,

Please accept my submission for the above Bill.

As we have been given so little time to make submissions with reference to particular issues raised in this Bill, I submit this e-mail, which I will also post to you, signed by myself.

One area which appears not to be addressed in this Bill is clear rules to protect Urban Restricted Areas by 4 kilometres. This needs to be implemented.

Research into the history of the consequences of mining activities indicates that the reservations I hold about undesirable results of these processes are well grounded. The danger to our aquifers, particularly with regard to coal seam gas mining is undeniable.

The aggressive take over by the mining industry of good agricultural land, and the massive use of water in a water poor country such as ours, are of concern in regard to this Bill.

Short term gain for long term pain has always been a disastrous course of action.

In 1981 the then Leader of the Opposition, Bill Hayden, gave a speech on foreign investment. He stressed the need for “..appropriate foreign investment that encourages partnership. It must be a policy that allows all Australians to share in the development and benefits of our mineral wealth.”

He lamented that Australia would soon be turned into “a clapped-out quarry in the south-west Pacific while other countries will have built up the strength of their economies on the basis of the wealth generated here.” (‘Foreign Investment: discussion of matter of public importance.’ House Hansard. 11 March p. 641.)

This is relevant today with our unprecedented haste to extract our mineral resources. The inadequate time allowed for our submissions to this Bill is another example of this awful urgency.

Mining companies operating in Australia pay very low prices for the raw materials they extract. These minerals can then be sold on the world market at record world prices.

Most of the enormous profits from mining are sent offshore, as, according to the ABS, 52% to 58% of the finance raised for mining activities in the 1980s came from foreign investors. Those percentages are far greater today.

When we factor in the massive subsidies, concessional treatment with respect to payroll tax, rates and other taxes and levies; in-kind assistance through the provision of cheap or free water and power; lax regulation of the environmental impacts of projects; fast-track development

arrangements; construction of airports and other site-specific infrastructure, including the entire infrastructure needed by mining companies to look after workers and their families; then we question just how much benefit this industry ACTUALLY brings to Australia and individual Australians.

Canada, with a mining industry approximately the same size as Australia, provides just one tenth of the tax concessions for mining and research development that Australia does. (Australian Business Foundation, May 2011. Gruen, N. "The BERD in the hand: supporting business investment in research and development.")

Our Current Account Deficit is approaching an historic high, which challenges the mining industry claims that mining export income is so important to the Australian economy.

The mining sector accounts for less than 2% of our total employment, when we take into account the use of the 'multiplier effect' used by the mining industry to take credit for 'upstream' and 'downstream' jobs, such as employment in the construction and cafe industries. Total mining employment, according to the latest ABS figures, show 217,000 as at April 2011, compared with claims by the mining industry that it employs 750,000.

According to the Minerals Council of Australia 2011 'This is our story' the industry admits to placing just 1,000 people in new apprenticeships and traineeships in 2010.

It is my request that timely consideration be given to the issues raised in this submission, slowing down the processes in investigating and amending the relevant Acts in this Bill, so that Queenslanders are given opportunity to be heard on these concerns.

Margaret Airoidi,

