

INQUIRY INTO PREHISTORIC, DINOSAUR AND PALEO TOURISM IN OUTBACK QUEENSLAND

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Committee Secretary

Economics and Governance Committee

Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane Qld 4000

Subject: Inquiry into prehistoric, dinosaur and paleo tourism in Outback Queensland

Dear Sir / Madam,

Bengal Energy has supported the establishment and operations of the Eromanga Natural History Museum (ENHM) over recent years.

I personally hold membership #3.

Our Board of Management (Calgary) has supported our local efforts locally through direct funding and engagement of the many services the ENHM provides (e.g accommodation and meeting facilities).

As a company, we wholeheartedly believe that it is a vital part of the community attracting attention from tourists and the scientific community well beyond Queensland's borders and Australia's shores.

In our view, the ENHM is a landmark venue encapsulating regional progress and the plans for further development are world class.

More practically, the museum also provides a key repository for a collection of the Upper Murray Darling and Lake Eyre Basins as well as a base for ongoing field work and research. The educational value of bringing dinosaurs to life and experiencing a dig or sample preparation is unique and only a few places worldwide offer these opportunities to individuals, schools and researchers.



The location of the museum and its facilities are also close the Natural Science Loop around SWQ.

It is fair to state that Bengal has a special relationship with the dinosaur mystique with one of our Petroleum and Gas Leases over the site where the iconic *Australotitan cooperensis* that was originally discovered by the Mackenzie family and original dig site.

We have worked closely with the Mackenzie family (and the visionaries of the ENHM) to upgrade the property's Shearers' quarters (whilst retaining its historical appeal) for not only our staff and contractors but also for hosting the unique dinosaur dig experiences. The upgrades have included additions to the kitchen, toilet / shower and internet connection over time.

Our continued relationship with the Mackenzie family and the ENHM has seen Bengal investigate with its technology partners increasing the connectivity and infrastructure in the region.

These initiatives, based on an engaged community, can only see greater expansion of the natural Science Loop.: The Natural Science Loop could be connected to other areas of outstanding natural beauty such as the Northern New South Wales and the Strzelecki Desert.

By expanding, improving and sealing the connecting roads such as the Warri Gate, the interconnectivity of the regions can be enhanced and alternative routes for goods can be established bringing more business and visitors to the region.

From a resource company perspective with petroleum and gas tenements in the Lake Eyre Basin, the recent decision of the Queensland government has been disappointing. The longer term impact which is a reduction in activity will reverberate through the local Shires and communities which heavily rely on the annual rates by the resource sector as well as the workforce for employment and economic contributions.

For that reason, in line with the findings of the consultation, further investment in other sectors such as tourism is required ensuring robust regional communities not only survive but flourish.

For the industry and Bengal, there may be opportunities to transition to new energy sources and greater connectivity, a key ingredient to ensure that these opportunities can mature and be realised is to support and increase the demand in electricity and internet-based services. This can only be assured if the region is becoming more attractive to new residents wanting to cease opportunities and enjoy a good standard of living in a thriving rural community.

We at Bengal are hopeful that the Queensland Government continues and increases its support to the regions and further develops unique iconic opportunities such as these in time for an influx of visitors during the Olympic Games and beyond



Yours sincerely,



Kai Eberspaecher

Chief Operating Officer

