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8 March 2018

Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

egc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Mineral and Energy Resources (Financial Provisioning) Bill 2018

Gecko Environment Council (Gecko) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to offer comments on the above Bill.

Gecko is a not-for-profit environment association founded in 1989 and has been active for the past 28 years in protecting environmental values and ecological sustainability, particularly on the Gold Coast and is recognised as the peak regional body. Our mission statement is “To actively promote, conserve and restore the natural environment and improve the sustainability of the built environment of the Gold Coast region in partnership with our Member Groups and the wider community.”

We offer our congratulations to the Government for the swift tabling of a number of instruments that were drafted during the previous term of government. Our members welcome in particular the path that is being pursued to increase environmental protection measures, including the long-awaited container refund scheme.

Gecko offers its support for the provisions of the Bill to provide a more comprehensive framework for rehabilitation of land impacted by resource extraction.

We note from the Explanatory Notes that the key pillar of the framework is the introduction of a requirement for mines, as part of their site-specific environmental authority application process, to develop a progressive rehabilitation and closure plan (PRC plan). Regrettably, this requirement does not appear to be retrospective and does not capture existing resource extraction activities or those for which applications are being assessed. To this extent, the flawed system that this Bill replaces will remain in operation and we urge the government to redouble its efforts to ensure all holders of environmental authorities meet their environmental responsibilities in as timely and comprehensive manner as possible.

To this end we recommend funding for more compliance officers to investigate how rehabilitation requirements are being fulfilled, on a progressive basis, taking into account the needs for wildlife, habitat restoration and water quality.

We thank the members of the Committee consideration of our submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rose Adams".

Rose Adams
Secretary