

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [EGC](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Submission to Minerals and Energy resources (Financial Provisioning) Bill 2018  
**Date:** Friday, 9 March 2018 12:53:39 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

9 March 2018

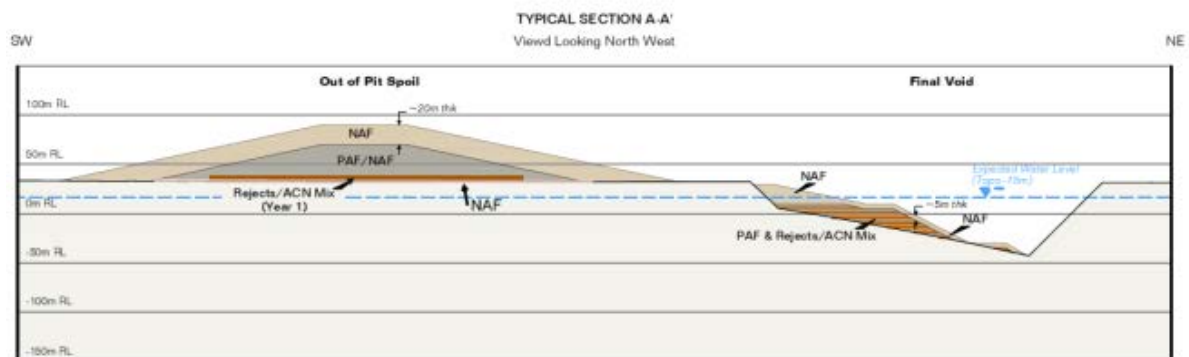
Committee Secretary  
 Economics and Governance Committee  
 Parliament House  
 George Street  
 Brisbane Qld 4000  
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**Re: Submission to Minerals and Energy resources (Financial Provisioning) Bill 2018**

The Mary River Catchment Coordination Committee (MRCCC) is a community based catchment management group which adopts a science based approach to the challenges of integrating multiple land uses within the Mary River catchment. We have particular expertise in water quality analysis and in assessing impacts on biodiversity and water quality associated with land use change. MRCCC has been actively involved in commenting on the proposed Colton Coal Mine near Maryborough and we focus on this project in our submission to the Committee as it provides a contemporary example of why mining companies should not be allowed to leave open voids and large overburden/spoil piles behind.

We urge the Government to adhere to their election promise to ensure that *'all land disturbed by mining is rehabilitated'*. In our view a large open void and large overburden/spoil pile that dramatically changes the landscape and presents a long term risk to water quality and to wildlife is not rehabilitation.

Colton Coal mine provides an example the current practice of allowing coal mines to leave an open void and spoil pile at the end of production. The Environmental Authority issued to the proposed Colton Coal mine allows the company, New Hope Coal to leave behind a pit 111 ha in area and up to 50 m deep and a 225 ha pile of mine overburden (spoil dump) approximately 60 m high. The proposed arrangement is depicted in the figure below from page 258 of the Colton Coal Mine Project Environmental Management Plan 2014. Please note that the out of pit spoil pile and the in pit spoil pile will contain PAF – potentially acid forming – material that can be responsible for dissolution of heavy metals into the water phase. Whilst this is to be covered the long term maintenance of the integrity of this cover remains in question.



The pit and overburden pile would be located in the near pristine Susan River catchment, a subcatchment of the Mary River. The Susan River contains recognised High Environmental Value waters approximately 5 km downstream of the proposed mine site and the boundary of the recognised Fish Habitat area is just 6 km downstream. This is a highly sensitive area and it is extremely concerning that rather than fill the void and reduce long term risk of contamination of surface and ground water with heavy metals, acidity

and salt the company is permitted to “manage” the risk in this way. Questions also hang over how damage post mine operation would be detected and who would ultimately be responsible.

Leaving an open void and pile of overburden containing potentially acid forming material behind is just one of numerous threats this project represents to water quality in the internationally recognised Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Wetland and the environmentally significant Mary River. It seems archaic that an Environmental Authority issued in 2017 can allow this kind of practice in a modern mine. As company’s making a profit from extracting the natural resources from our landscape it is appropriate that they maintain responsibility for the damage they can do and minimise the risk. This would entail filling the void so that the landform is similar to before the mine and the risk of ongoing water contamination is minimised.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you wish to discuss this submission further.

Yours sincerely,



**Ian Mackay**  
**Chair**  
**MRCCC**

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