

Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 013
Submission By: Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland Inc
Publication: Making the submission and your name public



Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

By Email: EPAct.Policy@des.qld.gov.au

16 October 2025

Re: Realising efficiencies and streamlining in the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and other portfolio amendments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further feedback on the *Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (the Bill)*.

Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland (EnvA) is a grassroots community group based in the largest coal mining region in Australia. We are concerned about the direct impacts of coal mining and coal seam gas projects on our environment and their contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) emission fuelling anthropogenic climate impacts.

EnvA appreciates the updated exposure draft and the supplementary information to assist in the interpretation and understanding of the exposure draft.

Building on from our submission made on 12 July 2025¹, we are generally comfortable with the proposed amendments but retain some concerns as outlined below.

EnvA's submission

Best Practice Environmental Management codes

EnvA notes that the introduction of Best Practice Environmental Management (BPEM) codes will not be progressed.

EnvA considers that BPEM codes would assist in providing clear guidance to industry on the standards it is required to meet and would assist productivity with the Department of Environment, Tourism Science, and Innovation (DETSI).

The reasons given for not progress codifying BPEM included risks to business certainty, increased cost and lack of flexibility – are unconvincing. Best practice environmental management should be mandatory for all projects and that the requirements should be flexible to reflect new knowledge and understanding. This is particularly important for projects of long duration where Environmental Authority conditions may become outdated and no longer reflect best practice.

DETSI, as a regulator, has a clear role to play in protecting the environment and communities and so it should be empowered to amend BPEM as it sees fit to achieve these purposes with a focus on State Environmental Protection Priorities (SEPP).

It was predictable that industry would raise concerns about changes to BPEM, but we consider

¹ [EnvA \(July 2025\). Submission to the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation on the Realising efficiencies and streamlining in the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and other portfolio amendments consultation paper](#)



that the role of Queensland's environmental protection legislation is to protect the environment and ensure that developments are sustainable and well managed.

We strongly recommend that DETSI reconsiders the proposal to not progress codifying BPEMs or at least make provision in the Bill for the development and implementation of best practice management codes.

Public comment on terms of references

The Bill proposes to remove public notification of Terms of Reference (**TOR**) for Environmental Impact Statements (**EIS**).

EnvA previously argued that public consultation on the TOR should be retained, but we also acknowledge that the standard TOR requirements are relatively comprehensive. Nonetheless, our submissions on previous draft TORs and subsequent EISs have identified two persistent shortcomings:

- Inadequate triple bottom line assessments, and
- Poor assessment of cumulative impacts.

If consultation on draft TORs is to be removed, we request that an alternative opportunity be provided for public comment on the proposed TORs, or that further guidance be incorporated into the standard TOR to strengthen expectations regarding project justification and cumulative impact assessment.

Amendments to Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plan (PRCP) transitional provisions

PRCP requirements for resource activities took effect on 1 November 2019. EAs granted prior to this date were required to transition to the new PRCP framework and have had six years to prepare their plans. All new site-specific EA applications submitted after 1 November 2019 have been required to include a PRCP with their application.

EnvA strongly believes that the transfer of an EA under transitional provisions should not justify any significant delay in submitting or finalising a PRCP. While we acknowledge that the new EA holder may require an extension to the timeframe for finalising a PRCP, we consider that this should be limited to a maximum of 12 months. Allowing time extensions via new landholder agreements opens a loophole through which ownership could be transferred—potentially within the same corporate group—to avoid fulfilling rehabilitation obligations.

Any change in ownership must place full responsibility on the new proponent to meet PRCP responsibilities within one year, rather than shifting environmental and financial risk onto the community.

As raised in our previous submission, we retain a serious concern that major EA amendment applications are not required to submit a new or update a PRCP with their application. For projects operating within the transitional arrangements, it should be a requirement that a PRCP be prepared for any extensions to the project and submitted with the application. Similarly, for extensions to projects already operating under the PRCP framework, an amended PRCP to cover the entire project must be submitted with the application.

Under the current arrangements, proponents are using the existing loophole to significantly extend projects without any requirement to submit a PRCP as would be required for a new project. We consider that this is a matter that must be addressed in the proposed Bill.

EnvA supports the proposal to empower DETSI to direct proponents to carry out rehabilitation where a PRCP or rehabilitation conditions are not in place.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide additional comments on the proposed amendments to the EP Act and other portfolio amendments.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Coral Rowston', written in a cursive style.

Dr Coral Rowston

Director

Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland