

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

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Clause 207 amendment of s479 (annual levy for underground water management), deleting "for underground water management", is extremely important. Currently the OGIA maintains it is unable to raise funding for modelling of overland flow of water on the Condamine River floodplain in the Arrow Energy Surat Gas & Dalby Expansion Projects, even though subsidence cause by the mining of coal seam gas will disrupt overland flow of water and has the potential to cause billions of dollars in damage and losses to road networks, communities, and agricultural sector. This has been a critical gap impacting on planning for impacts to road networks (and ability to use during flow events), communities, and the agricultural sector.

The Environmental Protection Act 1994 reforms must include a publicly accessible compulsory register of code-assessable Environmentally Relevant Activities (ERAs). Without this there is no information available to landholders, the public or the department. Oversight, compliance, and enforcement will be difficult and ineffective.

The Water Act 2000 reforms to change the Underground Water Impact Reporting (UWIR) cycle from three to five years should not be allowed to go ahead. The OGIA UWIR is an essential adaptive management tool to minimize risks to the environment and update management and information gathering requirements. As these measures can only be set in the UWIR, and not in an annual report, increasing the reporting period is highly likely to result in a lesser environmental outcome and adverse impacts to the agricultural sector, the community, and to infrastructure networks (e.g., roads).