



We are a community group dedicated to raising awareness about all threats to The Great Barrier Reef and building support for better reef protection.

07 April 2016

Research Director
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
Sent via email to: ipnrc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Chair and Committee Members

Submission on Mineral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission on the Mineral and Other Legislation Amendment 2016 (**MOLA Bill**).

We are very pleased to see the government fulfilling their election commitments to restore objection rights to mines through introducing this Bill to parliament.

Whitsunday Residents Against Dumping (WRAD) are a community group working to ensure better protection and health outcomes for our Great Barrier Reef (GBR). A healthy reef means coastal Queensland communities such as ours have a healthy economy. We are however, also concerned about environmental outcomes for land and water, our wildlife – especially endangered species - our flora and fauna, and our valuable farm lands.

As advocates for the environment, WRAD knows how vitally important it is for groups to have the right to speak up for our environment, as without community groups our environment has no voice. We want to ensure that all concerned communities retain objection rights for all mining proposals, as all mining poses very real threats of substantial environmental harm not only to our land, water, farms, oceans and reefs, but also to human health and wellbeing. All people concerned with the impacts of mining have a right to have their concerns heard by an independent court, free of political pressures, to ensure the best environmental, economic and social outcomes from mining projects. It is important to remember that mining resources are the public property of all Queenslanders, so these projects should be assessed with regard to the concerns of all Queenslanders who wish to have their concerns heard.

This summer the GBR has suffered the worst coral bleaching event ever recorded. Ninety five percent of reefs in the northern section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park have sustained severe bleaching, with 50% of corals expected to die in these badly bleached areas. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority states that greatest



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threat to our GBR is climate change. Scientists have unequivocally stated that the severe bleaching endured this year is due to the influence of climate change. Scientists also teach us that the mining and burning of coal is a major contributor to climate change, and therefore reef destruction. Our major concern is the extremely damaging effects climate change has on our World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef. As our goal is better reef protection and health, we know it is crucial for community groups such as ours to have our concerns about mining heard and taken into account.

We recommend that the Committee supports the passing of those clauses of the MOLA Bill which ensure that:

- community objections rights are fully reinstated for all mining proposals; and
- the full list of criteria for consideration for the grant of mining leases are fully reinstated for the Land Court, as for the Minister, including the financial and technical capabilities of the proponent (for example clauses 92 and 93).

We suggest that the Committee recommend the reconsideration of the following elements of the Common Provisions Act and the MOLA Bill, which continue to curtail landholder rights:

- Remove coordination of public notification periods which limit opportunities to provide submissions – *repeal section 260 Common Provisions Act.*
- Remove landholders' 'right to elect to opt out' of rights – *repeal section 45 Common Provisions Act:*
- Prescribed distances for restricted land should be increased – *amend clause 7 MOLA Bill:*
While we support the insertion of prescribed distances within which certain resource related activities cannot occur, the proposed restricted distances are inadequate to truly protect landholders from the significant impacts of mining activities.

Yours Sincerely

Sandra Williams
Director

And submissions group member authorized to write and send submissions