

WATER LEGISLATION SUBMISSION Dec 14th 2015

To ipnrc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Cc Hon Jim Pearce, MP

Cc Hon Anthony Lynham, MP

I acknowledge that the Palaszczuk Government's proposed Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 significantly improves the Water Act 2000 and the WROLA Act 2014. In so doing it increases protections of underground water supplies and the ecological communities which survive around them. Changes also give more protection of landowners in the event of disputes about water bores.

There are still some ambiguities and shortcomings in Qld's water legislation. Since Labor must amend the WROLA Act 2014 now, this is the right time to make the legislation as efficient and fair as possible.

These are *further* changes I urge the government to make:

1. **Revocation of mines' statutory right to take water.** In other words *all* water used be accounted for, leaving no ambiguity about what must be recorded and quantified.
2. **A requirement for water licences.** Licences are the formal process for applying for water.
3. **The independent authority of the Land Court.** This is the only sure way to ensure that there is protection of rural communities if water declines or disappears and to ensure environmental standards are upheld. .
4. **Strengthened assessment and approval processes** relating to groundwater impacts from mining. This adds to the management of these complex processes over several areas of legislation.
5. **Declared Cumulative Management Areas** in relevant mining areas. Approval for one mine at a time overlooks cumulative impacts.
6. **Independent predictive and conceptual hydrological modelling** for mining operations. Independence is better than self assessment especially in large operations.
7. **Improved Make Good Agreement framework** to improve equity and fairness for landholders. Currently there is still a bias towards the resource industry over landowners. .

Mining Companies who do the right thing have nothing to fear by these proposed changes; they are designed to pick up problems caused by corner-cutting and poor operating. There is a view that Mines have always had a statutory right to take water, and that this should continue. There is plenty of research indicating that every drop of water needs to be accounted for. There have been claims that landowners have abused the make-good agreement framework. This is further reason for independent modelling before the mining begins.

Gillian Pechey

12th Dec 2015