



WESTERN RIVERS ALLIANCE

Protecting the Channel Country

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To: The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

By email to ipnrc@parliament.qld.gov.au

15th December 2015

The Western Rivers Alliance (WRA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (WLA).

WRA note the changes that the WLA makes to the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Act (WROLA). However, we are deeply concerned about one very important amendment to the WROLA Bill which is MISSING from the WLA.

The WRA strongly believes that the WLA should include an amendment to revoke Part 4 of WROLA. This Part of WROLA gives the mining industry a statutory right to take underground water and removes the current requirements for them to get a water licence as is required for all other water users.

Part 4 of WROLA will harm agricultural water users and the environment because it will:

1. Remove the requirement for miners to obtain a water licence for the vast quantities of groundwater that they generally extract during mining operations
2. Reduce the ability of the Qld Government to act transparently to prevent unsustainable levels of water extraction by miners during operations
3. Remove the right for adjoining landholders whose water resources will be affected or lost due to the mining operations to challenge the grant of a licence
4. Remove the role of the Land Court as final independent arbiter who can rule on appeals against water licences granted to coal miners

Failure to revoke Part 4 of WROLA represents a very substantial breach of the promises which the Qld Government made in the lead up to the election, when it promised to '*repeal the Newman Government water laws which will....allow for over allocation of Queensland's precious water resources*'.

Furthermore, failure to revoke Part 4 of WROLA also breaches promises that were made by the Qld ALP to restore community objection rights against mining, because it removes the right of adjoining landholders to object to the provision of water licences to miners.

The WRA vigorously recommends that:

1. the WLA Bill is not passed unless it is suitably amended to revoke Part 4 of WROLA, and thus to prevent the granting of statutory water rights to the mining industry.
2. the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development should be extended to apply to the resources sector under Chapter 3 of the Water Act.

The WRA endorses the detailed comments on amending the current Make Good Agreements and the proposed changes to Queensland's Water Planning Framework as submitted jointly by Mr Tom Crothers and Ms Sarah Moles.

Yours sincerely

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