

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

From: Bronwyn Marsh
Sent: Friday, 18 December 2015 1:36 PM
To: Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
Subject: Submission to the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (WLA).

Please accept this as a submission to the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (WLA).

Our water is the most valuable resource on this dry continent. Our ground water is why we have been able to grow the food that is grown in many rural areas despite drought.

In the case of my family our ground water is why we are able to live in our area, we have a potable bore and we value this so greatly, I can not explain how much we cherish our ground water, it is a gift.

To have that under threat from an unsustainable industry such as coal mining and csg extraction is beyond belief. That the mining industry can take water of that quality at the rate they are able to, with no respect or regard to the people who rely on that water, deplete aquifers or pollute the water beyond use and that they are given access to the water before farmers, with no coast is, in my opinion, a crime against humanity.

The industry and government who give them access to water in this way should be held accountable.

We 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 WLA should include an additional section which revokes Part 4 of WROLA. Part 4 of WROLA gives the mining industry a statutory right to take underground water and removes current requirements for them to get a water licence.

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'*.

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.

Recommendations

1. **We request that the WLA 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. **We generally support other provisions of the WLA, although we believe that the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development should be extended to apply to the resources sector under Chapter 3 of the Water Act.**

Regards Bron Marsh.