



ABN 66 583 550 652

3 August 2012

The Research Director  
 State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee  
 Parliament House  
 George Street  
 BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Inquiry into the future and continued relevance of Government land tenure across Queensland**

The Queensland Trust for Nature (The Trust) is a Queensland environmental body whose aim is to be a highly valued, respected and independent organisation renowned for protecting environmentally significant, privately owned land. To date this has been achieved through the utilisation of a revolving land fund where land of high ecological value has been purchased by the Trust, a Nature Refuge then established on the property which is then resold to the public. The intent of this action is that the incoming land owner undertakes the stewardship of the covenanted land and oversees its future management and retention at negligible expense to the State.

The Trusts submission to the Inquiry centres on the permanency of Nature Refuges. Nature Refuges were first established under Queensland's Nature Conservation Act 1992 as a class of protected area. Whilst a Nature Refuge is noted on a property's Certificate of Title, it does not prohibit the exploration of the land under licenses and permits granted under the Mineral Resources Act 1989. This lack of permanency influences landholders and the general public's decisions on the value of Nature Refuges in terms of establishment and investment. Nature Refuges seek to increase privately held land subject to conservation, reducing the requirement for Government acquisition and management of environmentally significant land.

Nature Refuges are an increasingly important mechanism that allow for the ongoing protection of privately held land that possess important environmental attributes. Community acceptance of Nature Refuges is widespread. For example, since 2007 Agforce have publicly supported the Nature Refuge program in Queensland and in 2009 its Executive Committee publicly confirmed "That AgForce opposes mining on nature refuges in Queensland."

To date there are 411 Nature Refuges protecting over three million hectares of land in Queensland. A goal of the Queensland Trust for Natures is to assist with the promotion and establishment of Nature Refuges and to increase the area protected in Queensland. As such, the Trust seeks that the appropriate legislation be amended to remove the implicit right granted to mining and extractive industries under the Mineral Resources Act 1989 to conduct exploration and mining activities on land designated as Nature Refuges.

Regards

 A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben O'Hara".
 

**Ben O'Hara**

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