

The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
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Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013

I congratulate the Newman Government for its initiative in proposing **new legislation which will declare the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve and the Wenlock River on Cape York as Queensland's first ever "strategic environment area", and by so doing protect these areas from open cut and strip mining in perpetuity.**

There is already a substantial body of scientific evidence which identifies the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve and the Wenlock River as containing some of the highest natural values in Australia.

My field of scientific study is Ecology with my qualifications being a B.Sc & Ph.D.

My experience in the field at the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, and subsequent scientific analysis, is to undertake biological research into the habitat utilisation of riverine predators.

Having the threat of mining hanging over the reserve, it has always been difficult for me to dispel uncertainty about the protection and preservation of this iconic environmental asset. Moreover, it has made it challenging to plan and obtain funding for long-term scientific research projects.

I wish to endorse the announcement by the government **that any activities that risk irreversible, or widespread impacts to the ecological integrity of the natural values of the Wenlock strategic environmental area as identified in the Draft Cape York Regional Plan, will not be allowed.**

Legislation leading to this outcome will be seen as safeguarding this ecologically significant part of Queensland for future generations.

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