



25 February 2014

Supplementary submission No. 079

25 February 2014

11.1.14

The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
sdiic@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Calls for Supplementary Submissions to the Qld Parliamentary Inquiry into the Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013

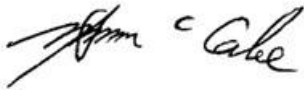
Capricorn Conservation Council the principle community conservation group in Central Queensland since 1973 wishes to make the following submission to the Inquiry into the Regional Planning Interests Bill 2013.

- The Bill fails to clearly prohibit mining, industrial or large-scale agricultural activity or other destructive development in ecologically sensitive areas, including but not limited to Strategic Environmental Areas under current or intended regional plans.
- The Bill fails to explicitly place protection of ecological values, including Wild River High Preservation Areas and Special Floodplain Management Areas, and World Heritage standard landscapes, over the interests of mining and destructive development, and failing to provide certainty that such resource applications will be refused. Rather than a principle of 'assumed coexistence' the Precautionary Principle should be applied to ensure risks to ecological values are removed.
- The Bill creates loopholes around small scale mining activity in current Wild River Declarations on Cape York and in Western Queensland.
- The Bill prevents public/third party appeals regarding regional interests assessment and decisions, nor public/third party appeals regarding changes to an Environmental Authority arising from the granting of a Regional Interests Authority.
- The Bill fails to provide transparency because significant components of the legislation will only be included in a Regulation which is not available for public scrutiny.
- The Bill grants sweeping powers of discretion to the Director-General of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, such that she or he may be directed or pressured to allow mining applications in Strategic Environmental Areas (SEAs) or other sensitive areas.

We are particularly concerned about the pace of the process for the proposed Regional Planning Interests legislation and the Inquiry instructed to examine it. The subordination of a range of important details to a Regulation, and the absence of the intended Regulation for any public examination, makes it difficult to fully assess how the Bill will work in practice.

Given our concerns about this legislation representing a backward move in environmental protections in Queensland, we urge you and the Committee to seek either the withdrawal of the Bill and its replacement with strengthened protections for SEAs and other recognised areas of ecological value, or substantial amendment to achieve such environmental protection outcomes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael McCabe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "McCabe".

Michael McCabe

Coordinator