

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

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee consideration of the State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014**

I have been directed by the State Council of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (Wildlife Queensland) to forward comments for consideration by the committee on the above Bill. Wildlife Queensland is one of the longest established and most respected wildlife-focused conservation groups in Queensland. With over 5500 supporters spread across branches throughout the State with supporters interstate and overseas, Wildlife Queensland is a strong voice for our wildlife and its habitat.

Wildlife Queensland is apolitical. Our aims include;

- Preserve the flora and fauna of Australia by all lawful means
- Educate the community in an understanding of the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment
- Discourage by all legal means, the possible destruction, exploitation and unnecessary development of any part of the natural environment.
- Encourage rational land use and proper land planning of existing and future development, and the use of the natural environment and its management.

Wildlife Queensland appreciates this opportunity to make comment on aspects of this Bill dealing with Wild Rivers.

Wildlife Queensland opposes the sections of the *State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014* (the Bill) at least to the extent that it seeks to repeal the *Wild Rivers Act 2005*. It is our view there is need for strong state legislation protecting some of the last remaining, pristine or near pristine waterways left in Queensland if not the planet. The Wild Rivers Act 2005, and its associated Wild River Declarations, achieved that for all practical purposes and in fact should have captured several other waterways.

Wildlife Queensland is of a view that the 'Strategic Environmental Area' (SEA) approach to rivers protection in Queensland being put forward by the government fails to restrict mining and other destructive development in sensitive river areas. In addition the proposed approach does not lend itself to adequate management of whole river systems to protect our declining biodiversity and limit further fragmentation of our natural landscape.

Wildlife Queensland is concerned if the recent decision by the Federal Court has influenced this decision by the Queensland Government. While several claims were the focus of the initial application to the High Court which in turn was referred to the Federal Court, the Federal Court only ruled on one aspect. That ruling indicated that the declaration of the Archer, Stewart and Lockhart Rivers were not properly made and further indicated that it was not necessary to deal with the other claims made. This is no reason to repeal legislation that has worked effectively for several years.

The intended action foreshadowed by Government of repealing the legislation in August is a retrograde step.

Another major concern is that the proposed legislation could be open to arbitrary amendment and lack of transparency and precision concerning boundaries that the Wild River Declarations have provided over time. There is a need for parliament to be able to scrutinize Ministerial –endorsed mapped areas purporting to protect the waterways.

Wildlife Queensland is opposed to the Bill and is strongly opposed to the proposed repeal of the Wild Rivers legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Des Boyland', followed by a large, stylized capital 'D'.

Des Boyland, Policies and Campaigns Manager  
25<sup>th</sup> June 2014