



Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee

Sent via email only: sdnraidc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Chair and Committee members,

RE: Submission on the Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018

The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) is the leading charity devoted solely to caring for Australia's oceans and their wildlife. AMCS has over 250,000 members and supporters in Australia (30% in Queensland) whom we represent and work with on key marine issues facing the nation. Our focus includes working to protect the Great Barrier Reef and tackling human induced climate change, mitigating its impacts on the marine environment.

We thank-you for the opportunity to make a submission on this Bill amendment.

AMCS strongly supports the Bill's intent to terminate existing coal mining leases in the Galilee Basin, and prohibit the granting of new coal mining leases for land in the Galilee Basin. In addition, we believe it should be further amended to prevent all new thermal coal and gas projects in Queensland.

AMCS is a proud foundation member of the Stop Adani Alliance. Our opposition to Adani's thermal coal mine, and other thermal coal mining and gas proposals, is based on our profound concern about the impacts of climate change on Australia's oceans.

Climate change is the biggest environmental crisis we are facing. The impacts are already being heavily felt in Queensland and are putting our iconic places and species under threat. Nowhere has this been more obvious than in the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef. During the summers of 2016 and 2017, half of the Great Barrier Reef's shallow water corals died due to two consecutive marine heatwaves. Major bleaching and mortality also affected almost a quarter of deep water corals (40 metres)¹.

Hard coral cover has shown a steep decline throughout the northern, central and southern Great Barrier Reef². The loss of coral in all three regions (northern, central, southern) is unprecedented in the historical record. Many reefs now have very low coral cover. The geographic scale of recent bleaching means that breeding populations of corals have been decimated over large areas. Last year coral recruitment declined by an alarming 35-93%, depending on the species.

¹ <https://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2018/09/coral-bleaching-great-barrier-reef-runs-deep>

² Australian Institute of Marine Science, Long Term Reef Monitoring Program, Annual Summary 2017/18

In October last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The report found that human activities have already caused 1.0°C of global warming, and warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052. This means **we could reach 1.5°C in as little as 11 years**. At 1.5°C 70-90% of the world's coral reefs will disappear. If temperatures rise to 2.0°C this number increases to >99%.

Earth's oceans have been warming at an accelerated rate since the 1990s, with last year recorded as the hottest year on record for our oceans³. Increased ocean temperatures not only threaten coral reefs but also lead to a variety of other problems, such as sea level rise and more intense storms and cyclones with heavier rainfall. The effects will grow more devastating the longer oceans continue to warm.

Our oceans are growing warmer because they are absorbing excess heat from the atmosphere, caused by our continued burning of fossil fuels. The use of coal, oil and gas is the biggest threat to the continued existence of our iconic Great Barrier Reef and Queensland's unique and important flora and fauna. If the Queensland government is serious about mitigating the impact of climate change they must address the role they are playing in the exportation of coal and gas. Queensland is a large exporter of coal to other countries and is continuing to approve and support the development of large coal mines despite the climate crisis we are facing.

The Galilee Basin is estimated to contain 29 billion tonnes of thermal coal. Opening the Galilee to coal mining is consigning the world's reefs to oblivion. Adani's Carmichael mine alone is approved at the level of 60 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa), although due to finance issues the company has since downscaled its first phase to 10-27.5Mtpa. In total, nine thermal coal mines are proposed in the Galilee Basin which have a capacity of 282.5Mtpa of coal, equivalent to 600Mtpa of CO₂. Allowing the development of the Galilee Basin would not just fast track the destruction of coral reefs but place us on a pathway towards an uninhabitable planet.

Queensland has a lot to lose if climate change worsens. As the custodian of the Great Barrier Reef the government needs to be leading by example and doing everything it can to keep warming below 1.5 degrees. This is still economically and technically feasible. It just requires political will. The Great Barrier Reef is a global icon that brings in over \$6 billion to the economy each year. Queensland needs to be a world leader on the issue. This starts with terminating existing coal mining leases in the Galilee Basin and preventing any new thermal coal mines or gas projects to proceed.

Yours sincerely



Dr Lissa Schindler
Great Barrier Reef Campaign Manager
Australian Marine Conservation Society
4/145 Melbourne St
South Brisbane 4101

³ <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs00376-019-8276-x.pdf>