



EDO NQ
ABN 32 017 484 326
Room 3, Serbian Cultural Centre
67 Greenslopes St
Edge Hill QLD 4870 AUSTRALIA
PO Box 656N, North Cairns QLD 4870
E: edonq@edonq.org.au
W: www.edonq.org.au
T: +61 7 4031 4766
F: +61 7 4041 4535

1 February 2019

Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources and
Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

By email: sdnraic@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

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

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee in relation to the Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018.

The Environmental Defenders Office of Northern Queensland Inc. (EDONQ) is a not-for-profit, non-government, community legal centre specialising in public interest environmental law. For over 20 years, we have provided legal representation, advice and information to individuals and communities, in both urban and rural areas, regarding environmental law matters of public interest. We also deliver community legal education and undertake law reform activities. We provide services to communities in northern and far northern Queensland.

EDONQ largely welcomes the amendments to the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* (the Act) contained in the Bill.

Summary of recommendations

EDONQ supports the amendments of the Act regarding the prohibition of granting new coal mining leases for land in the Galilee Basin and the termination and amendment of existing coal mining leases over the Galilee Basin.

However, EDONQ recommends that the Bill go further to address our climate change obligations and should be enlarged to include prohibition on all thermal coal and gas projects in Queensland. This will provide better outcomes for the environment and give the Great Barrier Reef a chance of rehabilitation.

We note that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5° C (the IPCC Special Report)* states that coal use for electricity generation must fall to 0-2% of global electricity supply by 2050, in order to avoid the most dangerous extremes of global warming.¹ Such a rapid global phase-out of thermal coal requires immediate action, including the need to phase out existing thermal coal power stations and mines, and to ban the building of new thermal coal mines (like those proposed in the Galilee Basin).

Prohibition of granting new coal mining leases for land in the Galilee Basin

EDONQ supports clause 3 to prohibit the granting of new coal-mining leases in the Galilee Basin, regardless of whether the application was made before or after the commencement of this amendment.

Termination or amendment of coal mining leases over the Galilee Basin

Section 334ZJM provides for the termination of existing coal mining leases for land in the Galilee Basin. This amendment is consistent with the current termination provisions under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* by retaining the application of sections 312, 313, 314 and 318 of the Act. Section 334ZJN, in turn, requires the Minister to amend all coal-mining leases to remove land from the leases that fall within the Galilee Basin.

In order to limit global temperature below 2°C, “*the vast majority of the world’s fossil fuel reserves to be left in the ground, unburned*”; therefore, EDONQ supports clauses 4 and 5 of the Bill to prohibit coal mining in the Galilee Basin area.

Prohibition on coal seam gas in Queensland

We recommend that the Bill be amended to include the prohibition of all coal seam activities. According to the Climate Council’s 2015 report, “*most scenarios for stabilising greenhouse gas emissions rely on the world transitioning away from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy*”.² The CSIRO announced on 21 December 2018 a new report of the costs of electricity generation noting “[t]he inaugural *GenCost* report, prepared collaboratively with a range of industry stakeholders, updates estimates of the cost to generate electricity from new power plants in Australia; *GenCost 2018* found solar and wind technologies to be lowest cost.”³

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Kirstiana Ward
Principal solicitor
Environmental Defenders Office of Northern Queensland Inc.

¹ This Report was published on 8 October 2018.

² Ibid, page 3.
³ Ibid, page 3.

³ <https://www.csiro.au/en/News/News-releases/2018/Annual-update-finds-renewables-are-cheapest-new-build-power> on 29 January 2018.