



21 February 2019

Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural
Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

**SUBMISSION TO: INQUIRY INTO THE MINERAL RESOURCES (GALILEE BASIN)
AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

Dear Committee Secretary

I would like to express our thanks for the opportunity to make a submission to the *Inquiry into the Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018*.

The topic of coal mining, which is primarily located in rural, regional or remote communities across Australia raises several complex issues that are not able to be adequately explained in a short and succinct submission.

Nonetheless, the Central Highlands Regional Council would like to articulate the importance of the resources sector to the vibrancy and liveability of its regional communities. Furthermore, it is relevant to reinforce the contribution the region makes (with substantial contribution made by the resource sector) to not only the local economy but its significant contribution to the wider state and national economy.

About Central Highlands Region

Emerald, with a population of 13,532 (2016 Census), is a modern regional services hub located 300 km west of Rockhampton in Queensland and is the largest inland centre of the Central Highlands region.

Emerald is located at the heart of Queensland and is the business, primary production and logistics gateway between northern and western Queensland and southern regions. Emerald also acts as the central business district for the Central Highlands local government area, which comprises of 53,680 km² and 13 unique communities including: Arcadia Valley; Bauhinia; Blackwater; Bluff; Capella; Comet; Dingo; Duaringa; Emerald; Sapphire Gemfields; Rolleston; Springsure; and Tieri.



In 2017, the Central Highlands Development Corporation (CHDC) in partnership with the Central Highlands Regional Council commissioned a *Central Highlands Economic Masterplan*.

The plan states:

'The area includes one of Australia's largest coal reserves, the Bowen Basin, and is neighboured by the Galilee Basin, recognised as one of the Australia's new mining areas. The Central Highlands is rich in minerals and agriculture, with irrigation from water storage in Nogoia and Comet Rivers and boasts the largest sapphire-producing fields in the Southern Hemisphere. The region's wealth of natural resources and agricultural value has seen it attract significant investment over an extended period of time which has benefited the local communities and economy.'

With the communities and economy of the Central Highlands (and surrounding regions) thriving through investment in industry, it would seem counterproductive to introduce the proposed *Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018*.

The Central Highlands region, while not directly located within the Galilee Basin, provides significant services and industrial support to this area.

Central Highlands Community Reference Group Areas	Persons (2016 Census)	%	Key Industries
Emerald	15,091	53.96%	Mining 22.93%, Education & Training 10.49%, Retail Trade 10.19%
Blackwater	4,820	17.23%	Mining 58.3%, Accommodation & FS 9.49%, Education & Training 6.68%
Springsure	1,745	6.24%	Agriculture 40.05%, Mining 17.27%, Education & Training 7.67%
Gemfields	1,590	5.68%	Agriculture 26.12%, Mining 22.34%, Accommodation & FS 12.37%
Tieri	1,359	4.86%	Mining 55.59%, Agriculture 13.99%, Education & Training 6.12%
Capella	1,276	4.56%	Agriculture 24.25%, Mining 19.74% Education & Training 10.71%
Duaringa	470	1.68%	Agriculture 54.73%, Public Administration 9.88%, Retail Trade 7%
Dingo	448	1.60%	Agriculture 57.21%, Mining 10.45%, Manufacturing 10.45%
Rolleston	423	1.51%	Agriculture 70.45%, Mining 12.27%, Accommodation & FS 5%
Bluff	348	1.24%	Mining 27.32%, Transport 25.68%, Agriculture 12.57%
Bauhinia	238	0.85%	Agriculture 84.039%, Education & Training 5.04%, Construction 4.2%
Comet	97	0.35%	Agriculture 61.7%, Mining 17.02%, Education & Training 6.38%
Arcadia Valley	64	0.23%	Agriculture 66.67%, Accommodation & FS 13.89%, Mining 11.11%

Table 1: Population and key economic drivers in each of the communities

The Central Highlands region consists of 13 communities ranging in size, population and key industries, and while many other industries flourish, including agriculture and construction, mining dominates most of the region.



Central Highlands Region		
	2011	2016
ABS 2017 Estimated Residential Population:	31,083	28,610
Gross Regional Product	\$3.69 B	3.682B
Business Counts	3443	3114
Top 3 - Industries for Businesses #		
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1,302	1176
Construction	465	402
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (in 2011 Transport and Warehousing #883)	303	308
GRP per Business	\$1.07M	1.182M

Table 2: GDP per business comparison from 2011 to 2016

The above statistics have been drawn from REMPLAN, based on the 2016 census data.

The Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018

Central Highlands Regional Council strongly **opposes** the proposed *Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018* and its objective to prohibit mining in the Galilee Basin.

It is the view of council that, the *Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018* has failed to consider the current and future demand for thermal coal. The proposed Bill has not addressed how, if it was supported, communities that rely on mining (both within and outside of the Galilee Basin) will be compensated or how to re-orientate workforces to continue supporting the local economy. Furthermore, the proposed Bill has not realised that this demand for thermal coal will be substituted and met by other sources.

Central Highlands Regional Council supports and invests in renewable energy options for the consumption of energy at its facilities. Additionally, Central Highlands Regional Council continues to evolve its planning scheme to support, where appropriate, the establishment of solar farms.

In summary:

- Central Highlands Regional Council fundamentally **opposes** the proposed *Mineral Resource (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill 2018*;
- Central Highlands Regional Council has been and always will be supportive of responsible planned development within the resource industry;
- The focus for the Galilee Basin should be on strategic planning for its sustainability as an economic power house;



- The opening up of the Galilee Basin is not about one project – it is about ensuring the vast wealth of mineral resources within the Galilee Basin is sustainably managed for the benefit of future generations;
- The economic benefits of mining in the Galilee Basin extend to increased opportunities for support industries and services and provide certainty for small businesses across the region;
- The resources industry continues to play a major role in the Queensland and national economy;
- The proposed Bill will not have an impact on the demand for thermal coal;
- Central Highlands Regional Council continues to support investment in the resources and renewables sector.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Fletcher", written over a white background.

Daniel Fletcher | General Manager Communities
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