



Hon Stephen Robertson MP
Member for Stretton



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Natural Resources,
Mines and Energy**

21 APR 2004

Mr N J Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 19 March 2004 forwarding a copy of a petition, lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, requesting the House to stop all present mining activities and reject Mining Lease Application Number 50203 (MLA 50203) and further to stop any future mining of minerals in the North Arm district.

Firstly, let me address the request that all present mining operations at North Arm be stopped. Mining at North Arm was undertaken commercially in the 1930s. In 1996, a mining lease (ML 50124) was granted and operations commenced to re-treat old tailings and redevelop the underground workings. This operation continues to this day.

Activities on ML 50124 are monitored by the Safety and Health Inspectors of my Department and a number of inspections have been carried out. In addition, vibration monitoring has been undertaken by my Department and by the mine operator during underground blasting operations. The operator is required to monitor all blasting and report the results to my Department.

For the State to "stop all present mining activities" on the site would require either cancellation of the existing environmental authority, or a directive to suspend operations as a result of an unacceptable level of risk.

To date, operations have been carried out within the requirements of all relevant legislation.

The issue of the further applications for mining leases has been the subject of numerous contacts by local residents at North Arm and the surrounding areas with my Department, my office, the Office of the Premier and Minister for Trade and the Honourable Members for Noosa and Cooroora.

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In 2001, a further mining lease application (MLA 50184) was made with a view to extending the underground workings outside the boundary of the existing ML 50124. This application and the parallel application for an environmental authority over the extended area were the subject of a number of public meetings and deputations and both were eventually heard by the Land and Resources Tribunal. In 2003, the Land and Resources Tribunal recommended to me that both the mining lease application and the environmental authority application be refused. It was at that time that the applicants abandoned their applications, and shortly thereafter re-applied for a new mining lease application (MLA 50203) and a corresponding environmental authority.

MLA 50203 and the corresponding application for an environmental authority have been dealt with through proper legislative process by both my Department and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

I have been advised that the EPA has requested the applicants to provide terms of reference for a draft Environmental Impact Statement. This statement will be the subject of consultation with stakeholders and when the EPA makes a decision the mining lease application will be further dealt with pursuant to the legislation.

It is at this time that the petitioners will have an opportunity to object to the proposal if they so wish.

It is imperative that applications such as this be allowed to proceed through due process to permit any interested party to make submissions or lodge objections to the proposals before the matter is referred to me for either rejection or recommendation to the Governor in Council for grant.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP