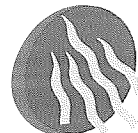




Hon Stephen Robertson MP
Member for Stretton



Queensland
Government

Your ref: Petitions: 1358-10
Our ref: CLLO/10038

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

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

10 JUN 2011

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 19 May 2010, forwarding petition number 1358-10 on the subject of "Stop mining on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve". I have considered the petition carefully and am pleased to provide my response.

Following extensive community consultation and consideration of 4000 submissions and 280,000 petitions received after the river basin was nominated for declaration in December 2008, I announced the declaration of the Wenlock River under the Queensland Government's *Wild Rivers Act 2005* on 4 June 2010.

The Wenlock River wild river area covers an expanse of 7,435 square kilometres and includes 13 major tributaries. Under the declaration, the natural values of the wild river area have been formally identified so that this precious part of the world that has been mostly untouched by development can be protected for generations to come.

The Wenlock Wild River declaration does not allow high-impact development such as open-cut mines, feedlots, fish hatcheries and intensive agriculture, in the high preservation areas of the wild river basin. However, the Wild Rivers legislation does allow sustainable development, if they do not have an adverse effect on the basin.

A key issue throughout community consultation was the extent of the High Preservation Area (HPA) or buffer zone to be declared around natural springs on Bertiehaugh Station, also known as the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.

I considered a wide range of issues, including community concerns, the views of local stakeholders, technical information and scientific reports, in determining that a 500-metre HPA for these springs (the Coolibah Springs Complex) is appropriate.

I took the decision for a 500 HPA, to ensure beyond doubt, that these springs are protected. The Declaration of the HPA around Coolibah Springs means no mining will be allowed to take place within the 500 metre buffer-zone around the springs and ensures the protection of unique wetlands and important wildlife refuge and breeding habitat.

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Further information including the complete declaration, maps of the declared area, the consultation report and the hydrology report in relation to 'Bauxite Springs' are now available at www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildrivers/wenlock

The process for the grant of any mining lease applications in wild river areas will continue through due process with consideration of the requirements of all applicable environmental legislation, including the *Wild Rivers Act 2005*.

Mining and exploration activities in Queensland are administered by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* (the MRA).

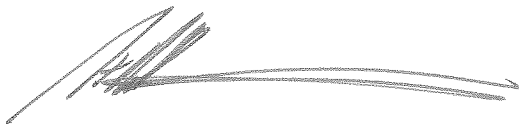
A mining lease in Queensland cannot be granted without a relevant Environmental Authority (EA) issued by the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*. The process for the issue of an EA also involves detailed assessment of the application, provides for public consultation and includes opportunity for objection to the issue of the Authority.

Sustainable development that protects environmental values is a state-wide concern and one that the Queensland Government takes very seriously.

Further detailed information regarding the MRA processes can be obtained from the Department's website www.deedi.qld.gov.au and information regarding environmental processes is available at www.derm.qld.gov.au

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Mr Luke Croton, Regional Director, Northern Region, of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone (07) 4760 7434.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Robertson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP