



Hon Kate Jones MP
Member for Ashgrove



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Climate Change
and Sustainability**

Ref: BNE2314
BNE2009/4538

16 June 2009

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George St Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 28 April 2009 concerning petition number 1188-09 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly. The following is provided as a response to this petition.

A nature refuge agreement provides an additional level of consideration when exploration or mining activities are proposed over a nature refuge. Applicants for mining activities in Queensland require approvals under both the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* and the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, administered by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, and the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) respectively.

DERM must issue an environmental authority before an application for an exploration or mining tenement can be granted, and through the conditions of the environmental authority, DERM is able to ensure that consideration is given to high value conservation areas.

A nature refuge is classed as a Category C Environmentally Sensitive Area in the DERM Code of Environmental Compliance. This means that the holder of an environmental authority must consult with DERM prior to conducting activities within a nature refuge. The Code enables extra conditions to be applied to activities in the nature refuge area. Whilst no mining has occurred on a nature refuge to date, DERM has successfully conditioned exploration activities on a number of nature refuges.

Companies must report their exploration results to the government. Together with the understanding gained from studies of the environmental and social values of the area, this enables the government to make better informed decisions in the event that a company submits a mining proposal.

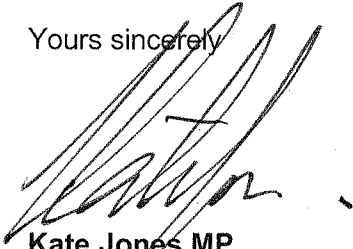
Should a major mine or mineral development project be proposed in a nature refuge area, the application would be assessed on a case by case basis that may involve an Environmental Impact Statement, and any resulting environmental authority would be conditioned to provide appropriate protection of environmental values of the area as well as rehabilitation requirements if appropriate. A nature refuge provides evidence of the area

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having significant values. In some cases one or more off-sets for impacts on environmental values may be required.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact Tony Baker of the Department of Environment and Resource Management on telephone 07 32340152.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Jones', written over the words 'Yours sincerely'.

Kate Jones MP
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability