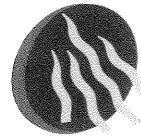




Hon Stephen Robertson MP
Member for Stretton



**Queensland
Government**

Your ref: Petitions
Our ref: CLLO/09068

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

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

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 27 November 2009, forwarding petition number 1248-09 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.

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

In Queensland, the process for obtaining the grant of a mining lease involves a detailed assessment of the application, including public notification and an opportunity for persons affected by the application to object to the grant of the lease. Objections to the grant of a mining lease are referred to the Land Court for determination.

The grant of a mining lease is also dependant on the issuing of a relevant Environmental Authority by the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*. The process for the issue of an Environmental Authority involves a detailed assessment of the application, commonly provides for public consultation and includes opportunity for objection to the issue of the authority. Objections to the issue of an Environmental Authority are also referred to the Land Court for determination.

The owners of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, also know as Bertiehaugh Station have made application for a Nature Refuge under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* over the property and DERM is proceeding with negotiating the terms of the proposed conservation management agreement.

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Nature refuges are listed as one of the classes of protected areas under section 14 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. While the Nature Conservation Act specifically prohibits mining in national parks and conservation parks, the Act does not prohibit mining activities within nature refuges.

Before the property was bought by Silverback Pty Ltd there were tenements for mineral exploration over part of the property and adjoining lands. These approvals were issued under the *Mineral Resource Act 1989* and the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* in 2006 and 2007.

As you are aware, the holder of the tenements, Cape Alumina Pty Ltd, has made application to progress to the mining stage. The mining applications are being assessed by the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the most rigorous assessment process available. The EIS will identify how the proposed mining venture would potentially impact on the environmental values of the site and propose measures to avoid or mitigate those impacts. Assessment of the proposal will be undertaken within this context to ensure that, should the project proceed, the environmental values of the area are preserved or satisfactorily rehabilitated. The Queensland government will make a decision on whether or not mining should proceed after its consideration of the EIS.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance. Should you have any further enquiries, please contact Mr Luke Croton, Regional Director, Northern, Statewide Services Division of QME on telephone 4760 7434.

Yours sincerely

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

STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP