



Hon Andrew Cripps MP  
Member for Hinchinbrook



Queensland  
Government

Minister for Natural Resources  
and Mines

CLLO/12027

12 JUN 2012

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

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil*

Thank you for your letter of 30 May 2012, forwarding for response petition 1818-11 as tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 29 May 2012.

Queensland voters have entrusted the newly elected government to grow a four pillar economy that will drive economic growth, job creation and prosperity. The resources and energy sector is a major economic contributor for Queensland and is one of the four pillars that will help drive the economy. As part of a balanced approach, the government recognises the importance of demanding world's best environmental practice and social responsibility, and is committed to protecting the environment.

Mining and exploration activities in Queensland are administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* (MRA).

On 4 June 2010, a declaration of the Wenlock River Basin was announced under the *Wild Rivers Act 2005*. As a result of this declaration, certain areas of land now currently declared wild river areas are not available to carry out mining lease activities. In particular, a 500 metre high preservation area (HPA) was determined around the Coolibah Springs complex that is situated in the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.

The company making the application to mine concluded that, as a result of the declaration of the HPA, the project was no longer economically viable under forecast economic conditions and that it could not proceed unless the HPA was reduced in size.

At the recent State election, the Queensland Government committed to protecting Cape York's iconic natural areas and areas of high conservation value, balanced with appropriate economic development.

Part of this commitment included removing the wild river declaration on Cape York.

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The government has committed to replacing wild river declarations on Cape York Peninsula with a Bioregion Management Plan to be developed with the input of Cape York locals and other relevant stakeholders. This approach will not only address pristine waterway management but will also allow for the integration of protected area and natural resource management, and will support sustainable economic development opportunities for communities across the Cape York region.

Under the MRA, any eligible person may make an application over available land for the grant of a mining lease. 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 of Queensland for determination.

The grant of a mining lease is also dependent on the issuing of a relevant environmental authority by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*. The process for the issue of an environmental authority involves a detailed assessment of the application, 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 of Queensland for determination.

The process for the grant of any mining lease applications in the Cape York area will continue through due process with consideration of the requirements of all applicable environmental legislation, including environment impact assessments.

Any enquiries regarding this response can be referred to Mr Luke Croton, Regional Director, Northern, Mines, Department of Natural Resources and Mines, on telephone 4760 7434.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Cripps'.

**Andrew Cripps MP**  
**Minister for Natural Resources and Mines**