



Hon Andrew Cripps MP
Minister for Natural Resources and Mines

Your ref: 10.4 Petitions
Ref: CLLO/13041

Level 17 QMEC Building
61 Mary Street Brisbane Qld 4000
PO Box 15216 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3225 1861
Facsimile +61 7 3224 2491
Email nrm@ministerial.qld.gov.au

28 APR 2013

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

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil*

Thank you for your letter of 17 April 2013, forwarding for response petition 1991-12 (the Petition) as tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 17 April 2013, which sought to preserve the previous prohibition on uranium mining in Queensland.

On 22 October 2012, the Queensland Government announced the recommencement of uranium mining in Queensland. The government's decision ends the prohibition on uranium production established in 1989 and allows for the export of the resource. It is important to note that the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* does not expressly prohibit the mining of uranium, and that it is already subject to extensive State and Commonwealth Legislation regarding its: mining; transportation; processing; waste management; export and import control; and environmental issues.

Following its decision to recommence uranium mining, the government established an independent Uranium Mining Implementation Committee (the Committee) to report on how the uranium mining and export industry should be re-established. On 18 March 2013, the Committee's report (the Report) was released. The Report provides a framework for best practice industry development and regulation in Queensland, and makes practical recommendations about various significant issues, including: environmental management and protection; safety and health; economic and community development; and the safe transportation of uranium.

In developing the Report, the Committee undertook a focused program of stakeholder engagement, with submissions invited from more than 70 groups and public feedback made available through the Department of Natural Resources and Mines' (DNRM) website. In all, 33 formal submissions were received. These submissions were reviewed by an independent consultant and the key findings were included at Appendix C of the Report.

The key finding from the stakeholder engagement undertaken was the strong need to demonstrate to the community and Traditional Owners the stringent environmental and safety standards that will be applied to uranium mining.

Committee representatives also travelled to Darwin, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra to learn from governments and companies who are currently involved with the uranium mining industry. Further, the Committee travelled to Mt Isa to hold meetings with Traditional Owners, industry, community and natural resource management groups in North West Queensland and to visit the site of the former Mary Kathleen uranium mine. Mt Isa was selected by the Committee for this visit given the number of known uranium deposits in the Mt Isa area and North West Queensland more broadly.

The Committee Chairman also undertook targeted consultation within Townsville given its proximity to the Ben Lomond uranium deposit and its history exporting uranium from the former Mary Kathleen mine via the Port of Townsville.

DNRM will chair an inter-departmental committee of senior officers from relevant agencies to develop the government's response to the Report. The inter-departmental committee will report back to the Resources Cabinet Committee with a draft implementation strategy for the 40 recommendations contained in the Report, identifying any budgetary impacts and identifying whether any legislative changes may be necessary.

The government will also establish a Uranium Mining Stakeholder Committee comprising representatives from local government, indigenous groups, industry, and environmental and natural resource management groups.

This government takes the concerns of the Queensland public and other stakeholders very seriously, and is committed to ensuring that the recommencement of uranium mining in Queensland is done in best practice.

Any enquiries regarding this response can be referred to Ms Susan McDonald, Chief of Staff, on telephone (07) 3225 1861.

Yours sincerely

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

Andrew Cripps MP
Minister for Natural Resources and Mines