



Hon Andrew Cripps MP
Minister for Natural Resources and Mines

Ref CTS 07296/14

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15 APR 2014

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 4 April 2014, forwarding for response petition 2174-13 as tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 3 April 2014.

Queensland voters have entrusted the 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 highest standards of environmental practice and social responsibility, and is committed to protecting the environment.

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

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

At the 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.

The government has committed to replacing wild river declarations on Cape York Peninsula with a Cape York Regional Plan (CYRP) 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 areas and natural resource management, and will support sustainable economic development opportunities for communities across the Cape York region.

On 20 November 2013, the Queensland Government released the draft CYRP for an extended consultation period. Submissions closed on 25 March 2014 and are now being considered. As part of this plan, it was announced that the government would protect the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve and the Wenlock River on Cape York Peninsula from mining by their declaration as Strategic Environmental Areas (SEA).

Planning aspects are likely to have an impact on an applicant progressing any mining lease application covering SEA. The consideration of, or grant or otherwise of, the mining lease applications remaining outside the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve area will continue through due process with consideration of the requirements of all applicable legislation, including native title rights and interests, environmental impact assessments and regional planning aspects.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Cripps', written in a cursive style.

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