



Galilee Basin Thermal Coal Prohibition Bill Submission

This submission relates to the proposed Bill for an Act to prohibit the mining of thermal coal in the Galilee Basin. The Black-throated Finch Recovery Team is a community-based group whose mission is to secure the conservation of the Black-throated Finch (southern subspecies) *Poephila cincta cincta* which is listed as Endangered under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) as well as under Queensland and New South Wales state legislation.

The proposed Bill is relevant to the conservation of the Black-throated Finch because of the vital importance of the Galilee Basin as a stronghold for the species. Portions of the Galilee Basin provide high quality habitat in narrow-leaf ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) and other woodlands and these areas support the highest known densities and largest known surviving populations of the bird. The only other area known to support relatively large populations is the Townsville Coastal Plain where the species is threatened by urban expansion, intensive livestock grazing and vegetation change, including weed invasion. The species is rare, if not extinct, further south in Queensland and in New South Wales.

Open-cut and underground coal mining present a major threat to the populations of Black-throated Finch in the Galilee Basin. These threats relate to mine footprints themselves, which can be substantial, especially in the case of open-cut mining, and to the direct and indirect effects of mining-related infrastructure. Offsets, as proposed for as part of the conditions for approval of developments, such as the Carmichael Mine, do not compensate for loss of habitat and populations of Black-throated Finch and there is the very real risk that there are inadequate areas suitable for offsets. Mine developments and associated offsets will always be associated with a net loss of habitat and populations.

The prohibition of coal mining in the Galilee Basin would reduce the threat to the southern subspecies of the Black-throated Finch. It would prevent the destruction through mining of large areas of high quality Black-throated Finch habitat and the populations it supports.

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