



Environment Council of
Central Queensland Inc.

ABN 56 740 735 001

P.O. Box 1399 Mackay 4740

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Phone: +61 2 6277 3526

Fax: +61 2 6277 5818

ec.sen@aph.gov.au

RE: Galilee Basin (Coal Prohibition) Bill 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Galilee Basin (Coal Prohibition) Bill 2018 (the Bill).

The principal purpose of the Environment Council of Central Queensland (ECoCeQ) is to educate and advocate for the protection of the natural environment including our air, land, sea and waterways and for the flora and fauna species that rely on the health of these ecosystems, including ourselves.

Global warming is happening now. The Bill is a straightforward proposal that will go some of the way to preventing an acceleration of global warming and the inevitable consequences of climate disruption.

We urge you to enact the Bill.

1. Twenty of the warmest years on record occurred in the last 22 years, while the "top four" took place in the last four years.
2. The greatest contributor (80%) to Green House Gas emissions is burning of fossil fuels.
3. Global emissions need to peak by 2020 and then reduce to have any chance of keeping global warming below a 1.5 degree increase.
4. Energy alternatives to coal already exist, are competitively priced, and are more easily distributed than central coal fired power stations
5. Jobs in central Queensland – Mining is 3rd bottom of all industry for employment. The 'jobs' myth that should be unravelled.
6. Royalties and political donations – Trinkets from the rich and powerful when considering the cost of what we lose. We must look at the other side of the ledger
7. The consequences of not limiting global temperatures could be ecological collapse
8. By 2040, 80% of energy for the 'poor in India' will be from renewables
9. 'Sovereign Risk' is a furphy. There is incalculable and infinite risk in accelerating climate catastrophes.

10. We ignore the warnings of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) at our peril

There is increasing anecdotal evidence of global warming, as well as scientific consensus as to its cause. Events such as the raging bushfires in Central Queensland devastating the rainforest at Eungella, west of Mackay - a standalone rainforest of enormous scientific significance. The wildfires in November ravaged 110,000 hectares of Eungella National park, an area unaccustomed to fire, with fire ecologist Phillip Stewart from the University of Queensland stating that it could take hundreds of years to regenerate, even under favourable conditions. The worst fires occur when we have high temperatures, low humidity, and strong winds. This deadly combination also caused burning in the Amazon rainforest earlier this year in an area thought to be fireproof. We can no longer make that claim as the planet heats.

It is straightforward to wind back the burning of thermal coal since there are competitive renewable energy sources readily available. There must be a plan to make the transition, but to continue business as usual because we do not yet have a plan is where the problem lies. During other major global circumstances such as world wars, Governments quickly mobilise and make a plan to focus on the war effort. We must do the same for climate change as this will have greater impact than on one or two generations. The impact of allowing global temperatures to escalate will be to plunge the planet into a cycle of interactive climate events that cannot be properly anticipated because of the feedback mechanisms.

Not only must we not allow any greenfields fossil fuel projects such as the Galilee Basin to proceed because of the effect on global temperatures, but we must also begin to train real people for real jobs to transition us away from existing fossil fuel industries.

Governments consistently talk about jobs when talking about mining, but ABS figures show that while mining is a big earner, it employs very few people compared to other industries.

The real consideration is royalties. Queensland had a royalties bonanza this year, but we are also enduring a 7 year drought, unprecedented bushfires, and are coming into cyclone season.

Governments are not good at considering the other side of the ledger. Cyclone Debbie clean-up last year cost \$1.7 Billion in insurance costs, though talking in dollars does not reflect the true cost to people's health and wellbeing and livelihoods. Neglecting to look at the other side of the ledger is true of drought, bushfire, floods – any disaster relief falls short of the real cost to people, places and ecosystems. Royalties are poor compensation.

There is no sovereign risk in creating government policy. This is what governments do. They should be responsive to changes in local and global conditions, whether it is in relation to health, water, war or climate change and adapt their policies accordingly.

The Great Barrier Reef experienced back to back bleaching with consequent loss of 50% of coral cover in the past few years. We are expecting a further bleaching event this summer.

Climate change is a difficult concept for some because they cannot see the changes, or it seems far off into the future. But we can see climate change now, in the changes to the Reef, in our landscapes, in our loss of species. We should not be complacent about these things happening on our watch.

We are the last generation that can do something to stop this relentless spiral into catastrophic climate change, and we can start by recommending the Galilee Basin (Coal Prohibition) Bill 2018.

Christine Carlisle
President
Environment Council of Central Queensland

[Last 4 years were the hottest](#)

[Greatest contributor to global warming is fossil fuels](#)

[Global Emissions need to peak by 2020](#)

[Alternatives to coal](#)

[Jobs myth](#)

[Royalties](#)

[Ecological Collapse](#)

[Indian energy poverty](#)

[You can't call any risk 'sovereign risk'](#)

[What is sovereign risk](#)

[12 years to limit climate change](#)

[IPCC Report October 2018 summary](#)

[Amazon rainforest fireproof](#)

[Cyclone Debbie 2017](#)