

20 October 2009



Mr Ian Holland
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

eca.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Holland

Re: Inquiry into the impacts of mining in the Murray Darling Basin – Supplementary Submission

The Queensland Resources Council (QRC) has returned its edited section of the transcript of the Committee's Hearing at Oakey on 29 September 2009 as sent to us on 7 October 2009. In your email with the draft transcript, you indicate that should we wish to provide additional information or to elucidate particular points, a separate supplementary submission could be provided to the Committee.

I note in the full transcript of the Committee's Oakey Hearing that there were a number of references to the flood event in the Fitzroy Basin in early 2008. To ensure that the Committee is not misinformed by any simplistic and alarmist conclusions drawn in some quarters both in relation to the details of the flood event itself, and the response by industry and government to that event, and by extrapolation, to risk transferral to the Murray-Darling headwaters area of this event, the QRC attaches 2 independent reports and related information for the Committee's information and the public record.

(Source: <http://www.fitzroyriver.qld.gov.au> . This website continues to be updated as the Fitzroy response process is advanced.)

The first report, by the Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, *Central and Western Queensland Floods – January 2008*, summarises and analyses the meteorology and hydrology of the flood event, as the context and trigger for all subsequent actions. The report also identifies that the rainfall experienced in parts of Central Queensland far exceeded a 1 in 100 year event, in some cases exceeding a 1 in 2,000 year event. The flood event in various locations was determined to be in a range between a 1 in 100 year and 1 in 500 year event.

The second report *A study of the cumulative impacts on water quality of mining activities in the Fitzroy River Basin* by the Queensland Government Environmental Protection Agency April 2009, identifies the new approaches to monitoring and managing mine water discharges for overall water quality in the Fitzroy Basin arising from the flood event.

In May 2009, the government endorsed the recommendations of the study and initiated projects to:

- Develop consistent and appropriate water discharge conditions for coal mines
- Develop local water quality guidelines
- Develop a model for assessing cumulative impacts across the region

To further improve water quality, the Fitzroy Water Quality Advisory Group (FWQAG), consisting of prominent stakeholders, councils and departments was established to:

- advise the government on implementing the recommendations of the report listed above
- look at potential water quality management issues for the future
- help disseminate information to industry members and the broader community.

The mining industry has been an active, responsible and continuing participant in these responses, particularly the development of the new water discharge conditions which are now being progressively introduced into catchment mine site water licenses between now and 31 December 2009.

The QRC commends these independent reports and information to the Committee.

In conclusion, QRC also draws the Committee's attention to the report in the Oakey Champion of 7 October *Osmosis delivers positive outcomes*, in which the public-private partnership on the Oakey Reverse Osmosis Treatment Plant demonstrates the innovation around water supply and management by local government enabled by recycling by QRC member company New Hope Coal Australia Ltd.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Roche".

Michael Roche
Chief Executive