



Galilee Basin Thermal Coal Prohibition Bill Submission

The **Protect the Bush Alliance (PTBA)** is an alliance of 22 NGOs and community groups in Queensland and Australia representing over 30,000 people. Our goal is to implement ways of preventing the continuing loss of areas of high conservation values to inappropriate development. Members of **PTBA** have had, and will continue to have, close association with many land holders and communities affected by the major resource developments planned for Queensland, as and when those developments strategically impact on areas of biological significance and diversity.

We are firmly of the belief that the magnitude of resource development applications presented in Queensland is out of control and presents a huge and totally unacceptable threat to biodiversity throughout this State.

We draw committee's attention to Hansard Wednesday, 5 December 2018 SENATE CHAMBER Senator Whish-Wilson page 43

Last week's Strike 4 Climate Action was an extraordinary event and an inspiring event. These children are our future leaders. They're smart, they're strong and they're clear-headed about what is important, about what kind of future they want for all of us. I was lucky enough to be in Sydney on Friday and to go to Martin Place for the rally. I listened to their poetry, their words and their songs. I saw and drank in their optimism and their inspiration—exactly what a tired and jaded Greens senator needed at the end of a long parliamentary year, at the end of a year of constantly fighting to get the environment and the climate on the political agenda.

He further noted; Primary and secondary schoolkids are so worried about their future, so worried about the fate of this planet—humankind and all other inhabitants of this planet—and so frustrated with this government and the world's governments' inability to act on climate change that they feel the need to get organised and take global action. And that, senators, is quite an indictment on all of us. Our kids are so devoid of hope for their future that they've gone on strike. That's a hell of a load for them all, at their age, to be carrying. We need to sit up and listen. Also, we need to recognise that this might be the start of something new. If the Prime Minister is worried that these kids are going on strike, he might want to reflect on what people might be prepared to do when more and more of them start to understand the true enormity of the climate emergency we face and the self-interested, short-sighted idiocy that is preventing action—good policy, leadership and the courage to act. Just this week, Sir David Attenborough said the following about the climate emergency we're all facing: If we don't take action, the collapse of our civilisations and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon. He also said: Leaders of the world, you must lead. The continuation of our civilisations, and the natural world upon which we depend, is in your hands. This comes from a man who consistently, throughout his life, has refused to be political, and, frustratingly for many environmentalists, has never really talked about climate change and the environment—until the age of 94. This is the first time in human history that we have all faced a global existential crisis of our

own making. We are the first generations to have to cope with a climate emergency, and we will be the last generation that can stop it. Think about that for a second. When people start to fully understand and internalise, when people realise that we have to choose to avoid a catastrophe—and that our inaction is because of the vested interests that have a stranglehold on our politics—the Prime Minister and future prime ministers might wish for the day when all they had to worry about was schoolkids going on strike. History is full of examples of people taking extreme action and direct action in the face of opposition from the ruling class to achieve progress, and when the future of civilisation is what is at stake we might expect that people will be prepared to take direct action; a future of civil disobedience. This government, and others which refuse to act, will have the blame for this land squarely at their feet.

Prime Minister and future prime ministers: don't say you weren't warned.

Senator WATT: COP in Poland;

What occurred overnight was that a number of countries, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Germany, France, Japan and Canada, signed on to a declaration that not only emphasised the self-evident fact that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time but also emphasised the need for governments around the world to undertake measures to ensure a just transition for mining workforces, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs for people who are affected by the energy mix. **This observation directly applies to Queensland. Continuing to sell the 'jobs' factor places all of humanity at risk and is totally unacceptable.**

'Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment'

Statement Human Rights Council, 37th Session 5th March 2018

Mr John Knox Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

In the six years since the Council created this mandate, it has become ever clearer that human rights and the environment are interdependent; a healthy environment is necessary for the full enjoyment of human rights, and the exercise of human rights is critical for the protection of a healthy environment.

Members of this Alliance are committed to the concept of the Rights of Nature; all living beings have an equal right to a safe existence.

Despite pressing for legislation to prevent continuing deforestation in Queensland there exists a double standard. We ask at what stage Queensland may be advantaged by these new laws if the resources sector continues to open the Galilee Basin.

Climate change is wreaking havoc across Australia with fires, storms and droughts, like we have never experienced before. The toll on all of the natural world is huge with many suggesting the severity of recent wild fires burning within the Deepwater National Park region, will most likely kill trees which are usually fire adapted. Species remaining in woodlands surrounding the fire zone are 'smoked out', eucalypt leaves alter their chemistry and become less digestible for Koala.

We then compound the loss of biodiversity by 'opening' up huge swathes of central Queensland for resource extraction which by nature of the industry, clears the landscape killing millions of animals across all taxa, pollutes the air and severely places at risk the health of creeks, aquifers and rivers - water necessary for all of life. These lands are not barren or unproductive; frequently areas of high conservation value are involved.

The mining tenement over Bimblebox Nature Refuge is a prime example; there destroyed forever is a protected parcel of intact Desert Uplands providing sanctuary for all living matter in a threatened regional eco-system. Described by its owner as 'sapphires tossed among brown paper', every species

is valued in its contribution to the greater health of country. Bimblebox is not alone – several Nature Refuges will be severely impacted because they lie unfortunately within the SDA of the Adani Mine.

Of concern to the birding groups of the Alliance is the welfare of the Black-throated Finch. Dr Tony Grice of The Black-throated Finch Recovery Group, has provided a submission on the work of his team. This represents years of academic input and effort by a team of dedicated people; their concerns must be heard. The recent release by Adani of the offset strategy for this species, simply highlights the absurdity of the concept of No Net Loss. Much of the offset land to the west, is unsuitable country for this species and in fact much of the offset area is contained within the tenement of the Alpha North Coal Mine application. The Adani offset is a dismal failure and further highlights the cost to country of commoditising our landscape.

This Alliance speaks for all of nature. Open-cut and underground coal mining present a major threat to the Natural Springs on properties such as Mellaluka and Doongmabulla 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. The Natural Springs in Queensland are unique with species only occurring in certain areas; species found nowhere else beyond Central Queensland. It is imperative that we do not lose these valuable natural assets:

<https://wetlandinfo.des.qld.gov.au/wetlands/management/wetland-values/>

We have an acceptance of Climate Change by the Queensland Government in the launch of the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Climate Adaptation Plan for Queensland, on the 9th of November. It is entirely incongruous to continue mining fossil fuels.

At the same time we are witnessing a widespread network of concerned citizens supporting the Anti-Adani movement but this movement extends far beyond Adani and Coal.

https://www.stopadani.com/action_station

Australia must accept its obligations in the World community to cut emissions and shipping coal to be burnt elsewhere, remains our contribution to a climate catastrophe.

As Queensland braces for another round of extreme heat, we should be gravely aware Nature has no escape; insects desiccate, small birds and animals die, landscapes dry out and fail to provide for the rich biodiversity found at ground level and in the soils.

The International Community is watching Australia; we are no longer 'down under' hidden from view. We ashamedly hold the record for the greatest mammal extinctions in the world and of land clearing, second only to Indonesia. Members of this Alliance who care deeply for the emblematic and unique fauna of Queensland, are not prepared to be silent any more.

The mega-mines of the Galilee Basin are not required; other productive mines are able to provide supply during the transition to clean energy. We must Keep Coal in the Ground, halt further CSG exploration and accept our joint responsibilities to the greater community of 'Life'.

On behalf of our members, we strongly condemn the opening of any new green field fossil fuel extraction anywhere in Queensland, particularly The Galilee Basin.

It is time to be bold and resourceful; the planet demands this of us all.

Yours sincerely

Sheena Gillman Project Co-ordinator
Protect the bush Alliance
P O Box 1040 Milton Centre Q 4064