



# Premier of Queensland

For reply please quote: *ERP/RL – TF/12/32045 – DOC/13/2777*

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Ms Sophie Dunstone  
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Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee  
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Dear Ms Dunstone

Thank you for your invitation of 4 December 2012 to provide a submission to the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee inquiry into the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Retaining Federal Approval Powers) Bill 2012 (the Bill).

The Queensland Government remains committed to achieving COAG reform objectives of developing risk and outcomes based standards for environmental regulation, facilitating the removal of unnecessary duplication and double handling of assessment and approval processes, while maintaining high environmental outcomes. The Queensland Government views the negotiation of bilateral agreements for environmental approvals under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) as a key mechanism for delivering on the COAG reform agenda.

As the Bill, if passed, would prevent the Australian Government from desperately needed streamlining of environmental approval processes, it is not supported by the Queensland Government.

The Queensland Government remains committed to high environmental outcomes and to protecting matters of national environmental significance. However, the current dual assessment processes create duplication in the environmental approval process that simply slows down the progress of projects while providing no environmental benefit.

I was disappointed with the Australian Government's decision to renege on its commitment to eliminate double handling of environmental assessments and approvals under the EPBC announced by the Prime Minister, the Honourable Julia Gillard MP, at the Business Advisory Forum meeting on 6 December 2012. However, the Queensland Government is fully committed to further negotiations to secure accreditation of state approvals processes under the Act.

Yours sincerely