

Select Committee into Certain Aspects of Queensland Government Administration,

PO Box 6100, Parliament House, ACT 2600

November 11th 2014

Dear Committee Members,

Please accept this as a submission to the Select Committee on Certain Aspects of Queensland Government Administration related to Commonwealth Government Affairs

My submission to the Senate Committee speaks to the following issues:

(1) Failure of the Queensland Government to properly control or regulate coal and unconventional gas mining and associated infrastructure in Queensland, and the negative impacts it is having on people, communities and the environment (more details to follow)

(2) Queensland Government policy and practice is inconsistent with Australia's obligations under international environmental law. For example inconsistency with the World Heritage Convention, the Ramsar Convention, and international migratory bird agreements and conventions.

(3) It is inappropriate for the Federal Environment Minister to delegate his approval powers to the Queensland State Government under the EPBC Act 1999, because of water impacts/endangering citizens' water resources (more details to follow).

(4) Queensland Government policies and practices are inconsistent with Australia's obligations under international human rights instruments. The Queensland Government is allowing mining companies to impinge on the right to health and adequate standard of living, including the right to water. The Queensland Government has allowed dangerous levels of coal dust pollution near Jondaryn and certain Brisbane suburbs located along the coal train corridor. Landholders and communities are losing reliable groundwater because CSG companies are dewatering the Walloon coal measures

With regard to human rights, the Queensland Government allows mining without facilitating free, prior and informed consent from Indigenous Traditional Owners, and without ensuring the right of Indigenous people to maintain and protect cultural property, and the right to religious and cultural sites. Indigenous people have raised serious concerns about losing access to their land and damage to important sites and locations as near Tara and on Curtis Island

(e) Other matters which appear relevant to this Inquiry include corruption and perversion of good governance in Queensland and the undue influence of the mining industry on our democratic processes. For example large donations from the mining industry apparently leading to favourable policy decisions. The revolving door between the Queensland Government and the mining industry is of great concern, as is the extraordinary access mining lobbyists have to politicians. I ask the Senate Committee to examine the manifest inadequacy of the Crime and Corruption Commission to investigate referrals relating to the approval of CSG projects and export terminals

Over the past few years there has been a reckless rollout & expansion of coal and coal seam gas mining operations. Flawed approvals processes, scant regard to precautionary principle and duty of care. Devastating and irreversible impacts are well documented: the environment, farmland, aquifers, food chain, habitat, sensitive ecosystems and our iconic Great Barrier Reef are affected, as well as tourism, small business, manufacturing and affordable housing

“The Australian Medical Association says despite urging government to be cautious about the potential health impacts from coal seam gas projects, little is being done to address the issue. Over 12 months ago the AMA called on state and federal governments to ensure all CSG proposals are subject to rigorous and independent health risk assessments. Past-President Dr Steve Hambleton says the industry continues to expand without any research or ongoing assessment of what the affects might be for human health....”

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-26/renewed-call-for-csg-health-risk-assessments/5478634>

(Renewed call for CSG health risk assessments' 26th May 2014)

Australian Doctors for the Environment have called for a halt to coal seam gas mining.
http://dea.org.au/images/general/viewpoint_issue_8_CSG.pdf

(Coal Seam Gas: Future bonanza or Toxic Legacy?' (peer reviewed) Viewpoint Magazine 2012)

Brisbane GP Dr Geralyn McCarron's has visited the Tara/Chinchilla coal seam gasfields many times, and has reported comprehensively of the severe health impacts on families living amidst the gasfields

(Symptomatology of a gas field. An independent health survey in the Tara rural residential estates and environs April 2013)
http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/lockthegate/pages/49/attachments/original/1367333672/2013-04-symptomatology_of_a_gas_field_Geralyn_McCarron.pdf?1367333672

The National Toxics Network critiqued the Queensland Health Department's report last year:
<http://www.ntn.org.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Critique-of-CSG-Health-Study-april20131.pdf>

According to Medical Journal of Australia our foodchain is threatened by coal seam gas mining <http://www.wAeeklytimesnow.com.au/news/national/food-threatened-by-coal-seam-gas-mining-according-to-medical-journal-of-australia/story-fnkfnspy-1226925933071>

(Food threatenend by coal seam gas mining according to Medical Journal of Australia' Weekly Times Now, May 23rd 2014)

There are over 5000 gas wells in Queensland that have industrialised once fertile farmland, drawing massive amounts of water from the Great Artesian Basin water bores. CSG operations contaminate water, air, people, domestic animals and wildlife. Families frequently report toxic poisoning symptoms caused by living in the gasfields. From burning eyes, headaches, blood noses, vomiting to rashes and neural symptoms.

85% of Queensland state and more than half of Australia is being mined or is set aside for mining, with no regard for the untold human suffering and health budget blowout along the track. Along with the well documented adverse health/environmental impacts of widespread open cut coal mining in Queensland, this is an asbestos-style crisis in waiting. Which generation will foot the bill?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AeWYwBreEY>

(Footage of helicopter flyover gas gathering systems in Surat Basin 15th June 2013)

The approvals, regulation and monitoring of this industry leave much to be desired, as revealed in (April 2013 Four Corners 'Gas Leak')

<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2013/04/01/3725150.htm>

Senator Larissa Waters asserts '...when it comes to CSG, our rural communities, our natural environment, our water and our climate hang in the balance,' she said. "We have a right to ask whether our decision-making processes have been compromised."

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/larissa-waters-accuses-campbell-newman-of-pressuring-cmc-probe-20140625-zslvi.html> (26th June 2014 Brisbane Times: "Larissa Waters accuses Campbell Newman of pressuring CMC probe")

Earlier this year serious questions were raised about political donations and conflict of interest within the Premier's Department, which tend to undermine public confidence in the rigour of coal seam gas/coal mining sector regulation. The Senate Inquiry would be aware of government's obligation to exercise "duty of care" towards its constituents.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/newman-public-servant-jon-grayson-to-cut-obeid-link/story-e6frgczx-1226907997362#>

('Newman's public servant Jon Grayson to cut Obeid link' May 7 2014 The Australian)

<http://coalseamgasnews.org/qld/campbell-newmans-hand-picked-top-bureaucrat-jon-grayson-forced-to-shed-his-business-interests-auspl/>

(6th May 2014 Coal Seam Gas news.org. 'Qld Campbell Newman's hand picked top bureaucrat Jon Grayson forced to shed his business interests')

Alan Jones talks about the disgraceful tangled web of corporate/government corruption revelations unfolding in Queensland.

http://www.2gb.com/audioplayer/47096#.U40X1uX_0eg.facebook

Steve Austin Mornings presenter interviewed Heather Brown Pascoe: 2nd Oct 2014 abc ANTI CSG CAMPAIGNER SAYS SHE'S BEING TARGETED)

http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2014/10/anti-csg-campaigner-says-shes-being-targeted.html?site=brisbane&program=612_morning

'Your house is broken into several times. Your laptop is stolen, helicopters buzz the place at night, your four-wheel drive disappears.'

It sounds like a plot from a crime novel but one of the country's leading anti coal seam gas campaigners alleges this happened at her home, west of Toowoomba.

Heather Brown-Pascoe, who has been a vocal critic of the Acland coal mine expansion, coal seam gas, and the Wellcamp Airport, spoke with Steve Austin about the allegations.

Steve also spoke with Bob Katter who said the matter should be brought before the senate inquiry into decisions made by Queensland's state government under Campbell Newman.'

Later that week, more was revealed about anti coal/csg campaigners Heather & David Pascoe being targeted. This level of intimidation demands the attention of this Senate Inquiry:

'David Pascoe is a respected Veterinarian who works in the Toowoomba/Darling Downs region. His 80,000 dollar 4WD was stolen and despite all the CCTV Cameras in Toowoomba the police can't locate it, yet David Pascoe has friends who call him up to say they have seen it.

He told Steve Austin the story:'

http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2014/10/a-missing-4wd-and-the-battle-against-coal-interest-in-queensland.html?site=brisbane&program=612_morning

(6th Oct 2014 abc 612 Steve Austin Mornings: A MISSING 4WD AND THE BATTLE AGAINST COAL INTEREST IN QUEENSLAND)

A continuous stream of eye witness accounts from gasfield residents and visitors have revealed that "produced water" from the gas wells is being sprayed from Qld Gas Company trucks on roads around Kenya/Tara gasfields i.e. toxic untreated water running off into waterways. Hardly "world's best practice".

APPEA has admitted groundwater damage (particularly impacts on aquifers) is unavoidable:
<http://www.theland.com.au/news/agriculture/agribusiness/general-news/csg-admits-water-damage-inevitable/2246378.aspx>

(The Land: 'CSG industry admits water damage inevitable' 3rd August 2011)

Vice President of Queensland Gas Company described their gaswells' inevitable impacts on rural communities as "collateral damage" (Sept 5th 2011 'Rural Queenslanders are collateral damage' Coal Seam Gas News)

<http://coalseamgasnews.org/qld/rural-queenslanders-are-collateral-damage-qgc/>

The peak national advisory body on water, National Water Commission said the coal seam gas industry poses "significant risk" to surface and ground water (3rd Dec 2010 SBS 'Peak body warning on CSG') <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2010/12/03/peak-body-warning-csg>

Dr John Williams is founder of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists. One of Australia's most respected scientists, he helped drive the national water reforms implemented under Prime Minister John Howard 10 years ago.

Sydney Morning Herald June 29, 2014: SCIENTISTS BLAST ABBOTT GOVERNMENT WATER POLICIES
<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/scientists-blast-abbott-government-water-policies-20140629-zsq4w.html>

Dr Williams says that “water reform is unfinished business across much of Australia”, and that “the future of sustainable and economic water use is much more than a debate about dams”. He says that water resources planning has not taken into account the “rollout” of CSG and coal mining industries. Also that groundwater and surface water are connected and must be managed in a “conjunctive” and more sustainable way.

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/calls-for-national-water-reforms/5842950>

Radio National Breakfast 27th Oct 2014: CALLS FOR NATIONAL WATER REFORMS

Queensland is in severe drought. The best drought assistance package would be to halt the reckless spread of water guzzling coal/coal seam gas operations. Water is gold, bores are depleted on Qld farms, the Great Artesian Basin is not a limitless magic pudding. Queensland and Federal Governments should be paying heed to the UN's call on World Water Day earlier this year:

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2014/03/21-2>

(Common Dreams.org 22nd March 2014: 'Fossil Fuel Giants Guzzling World's Water while Poor go Thirsty: UN')

“There is an increasing potential for serious conflict between power generation, other water users and environmental considerations,” says the World Water Development Report 2014: Water and Energy (pdf), published on the eve of World Water Day.

The energy sector, which has “great political clout,” the report states, is set to consume an unfair share of this limited resource, “despite ongoing progress in the development of renewables.” The report continues:

The overall evolution of the global energy mix appears to remain on a relatively fixed path: that of continued reliance on fossil fuels. Oil and gas extraction yields high volumes of ‘produced water’, which comes out of the well along with the oil and gas. Produced water is usually very difficult and expensive to treat. Unconventional oil and gas production is generally more water intensive than conventional oil and gas production.

While water demand is set to increase 55% by 2050, water use for energy production is set to increase 20% by 2035...'

(The Australian November 7 2014 'Great Artesian Basin Coal Seam Gas Risk')

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/great-artesian-basin-coalseam-gas-risk/story-e6frg8y6-1227115217993>

'Mr Banks, an adjunct research fellow with Queensland University, said CSG mining required holes to be drilled hundreds of metres to reduce pressure in the seam and allow methane gas to be extracted.

He said that in a worst-case scenario the loss of pressure could be enough to stop bores flowing throughout the basin, which is the sole water source for towns and farms across 22 per cent of Australia. Equipping the bores with pumps would cost billions, he said.

His report says 79 per cent of the basin’s most critical recharging area is covered by gas, petroleum or CSG leases.

The Artesian Bore Water Users Association, which commissioned the report, said it provided “sufficient solid evidence” to warrant a pause on CSG pending further studies. “We have no other water out here,” said president Anne Kennedy'

In drought afflicted Queensland, fire is an increasing hazard. With 5000 coal seam gas wells, chemical leaks are an increasing danger. Gas Companies presumably have evacuation plans (OH & S) in place for their workers on the field - but have the Queensland Government and their corporate mining partners put evacuation plans in place for residents and locals living amidst or else on the outskirts of the Qld Gas Company/Origin/Santos gas fields?

Do residents/locals have copies of these necessary plans should an event occur that requires their immediate evacuation? Have residents been involved in practise fire drills/evacuation drills?

Are bodies such as the SES clued up as to how to handle an evacuation emergency of locals (and their livestock) should there be for example, an exploding pipeline or nitrous oxide leak?

Are emergency services such as paramedics, ambulances, Regional Fire Services clued up as to how to handle locals should such an emergency arise? Because it will arise. It's only a matter of time.

These are two recently reported incidents, how many accidents/incidents go unreported?

http://pipeliner.com.au/news/240_workers_evacuated_from_fire_in_queensland_pipeline_camp/088481/

(Pipeliner.com 13th August 2014: 'Workers evacuated from fire in Queensland Pipeline Camp')
'240 Murphy Pipe and Civil crew members were evacuated from a workers camp at Duck Creek, near Injune in south-west Queensland, following a fire at around 1am on Friday 1 August....'

<http://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/workers-stood-down-after-chemical-leak/2423068/>

(Gladstone Observer 17th Oct 2014: 'Workers stood down after Chemical Leak')
'QUEENSLAND CURTIS LNG workers are being kept indoors as a precautionary measure following an ethylene leak on the QCLNG site last night.....'

How will the Australian Government address the issue of stranded assets and abandoned wells? Apart from fire hazards there are major '...concerns from landowners that the wells could contaminate groundwater and are a blight on the land...'

(Climate Crocks 4th Jan 2014: 'Fracking Wells abandoned in Boombust Cycle, who will pay to cap them') <http://climatecrocks.com/2014/01/04/fracking-wells-abandoned-in-boombust-cycle-who-will-pay-to-cap-them/>

There is a vast amount of drill/fracking mud the CSG industry needs to dispose of. Not just a small pile of dirt but highly toxic mud contaminated with heavy metals. If this byproduct is dumped in landfill or diluted with other compost waste, this surely constitutes a major public health hazard as it gradually leeches into waterways and the foodchain. The following link indicates that the CSG industry pays Nugrow to blend toxic drilling muds into compost/soil conditioner material which is redistributed back into the Qld community e.g. Ipswich and Gold Coast Council developments:

(Nugrow: Recent projects)

<http://www.nugrow.com.au/recent-projects>

Reverse Osmosis is another controversial technology used by CSG industry to treat vast quantities of produced toxic waste water. This is used in the Kenya gasfields. Dr Wayne Somerville's well researched concerns outlined in the following linked article is about food production and safety in Australia, and in particular Queensland and New South Wales:

'Chemicals that are unable to be successfully treated by reverse osmosis filtration include

bromoform, chloroform, naphthalene, nonylphenol, octylphenol, dichloroacetic acid, trichloroethylene, tris(2-chloroethyl)-phosphate, and water soluble substances such as the methanol and ethylene glycol are also poorly removed.

An ABC 2011 report showed that even after reverse osmosis treatment, CSG wastewater being released into waterways in Queensland contained a range of toxic substances, including boron and cadmium.

At present, the farmers in Chinchilla utilize this reverse osmosis water for their crop irrigation. The food is then distributed to the Australian population for consumption.'

(FRACKING, FOOD AND PUBLIC SAFETY Oct 2013)

<http://www.gasfieldfreebyronshire.org/news/what-you-can-do-now/dr-somerville-fracking-food-and-public-safety/>

Aside from the cumulative contamination and massive drawdown of aquifers/waterways leading to toxicity of food-producing land - there is the question of fugitive emissions of methane mixed with toxic gases leaking from wells and pipes.

Despite the Qld government and CSG industry advertising spin showing happy farmers co-existing with CSG, I have only met devastated Darling Downs farmers. The footprint of this industry is not just a 'well pad', it is multiple pipelines, roads, compressor stations, holding ponds, water facilities, man camps, offices, high and low point vents, flares.

("Reports of CSG harmony are out of tune: simplistic report gives false hopes" Basin Sustainability Alliance May 2014) <http://notatanycost.com.au/reports-csg-harmony-tune/>

Property rights and principles of natural justice for landholders are further compromised by certain provisions in the recently passed Mineral and Energy Resources Act. It once more pushes the balance even more in favour of mining companies at the expense of landholders.

<http://www.beefcentral.com/news/letters-to-the-editor/letter-why-landholders-need-to-review-resource-act-changes/>

Economists broadly agree that the mining/coal seam gas boom is over, due to a changing energy landscape worldwide. Around the world it is being named up as a fraudulent Ponzi scheme. The following articles point to market forces and various factors at play:

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/mining-and-resources/brisbane-spot-gas-price-hits-record-low-near-zero-20141002-10pckw.html> (Sydney Morning Herald 3rd Oct 2014: 'Brisbane Spot Gas Price Hits Record Low Near Zero')

(China Russia gas deal to undercut Australian LNG': The Australian/Business, 20th May 2014)

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/latest/china-russia-gas-deal-to-undercut-aust-lng/story-e6frg90f-1226923620452>

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/mining-and-resources/most-big-gas-export-projects-doomed-says-shell-20140609-39syk.html>

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/mining-and-resources/most-big-gas-export-projects-doomed-says-shell-20140609-39syk.html> (June 10 Sydney Morning Herald "Most big gas export projects doomed, says Shell")

The Saturday Paper 28th April 2014

<http://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/business/2014/04/26/the-end-coal/1398434400>

(The End of Coal': The Saturday Paper/Business 28th April 2014)

(Renew Economy 5th May 2014: Peak Coal? China coal demand could halve by 2020)

<http://reneweconomy.com.au/2014/peak-coal-china-coal-demand-could-halve-by-2020-93003>

<http://theconversation.com/not-so-cheap-australia-needs-to-acknowledge-the-real-cost-of-coal-26640> (The Conversation 9th June 2014: Not so cheap: Australia needs to acknowledge the real cost of coal)

The argument that developing African and Asian countries need our fossil fuels to lift them out of poverty is flawed, as Oxfam and Renew Economy recently pointed out:

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/renewables-for-the-poor/5864292>

(ABC Radio National 4th November 2014 'Renewables for the Poor')

. <http://reneweconomy.com.au/2014/big-coal-tries-control-global-energy-debate-92494>

(Renew Economy 23rd Oct 2014 'Big Coal tries to control Global Energy Debate')

'There is a growing drumbeat being played by the coal industry around the idea that their product will "save" developing African and Asian regions that are deprived of a reliable energy source or what is known in policy circles as energy poverty.

But I would say these countries deserve something much better than the old, dirty energy that we in North America no longer want.....

Call me cynical, but I would say this poor-need-coal concept is a Hail Mary attempt by a dying industry to find the few last markets for a product that nobody seems to want anymore. Markets susceptible to being convinced by sophisticated marketing techniques that coal is somehow "clean.

First, let's get one thing straight, there is no such thing as "clean coal." Mining and burning coal remains one of the most destructive of all human activities. It flattens mountains, poisons rivers and drinking water supplies, pollutes the air, causes severe respiratory illnesses, and is over-heating our planet....'

(WA Today Nov 7th 2014 'Miners reveal a poverty of thinking on coal')

<http://www.watoday.com.au/comment/miners-reveal-a-poverty-of-thinking-on-coal-20141107-11i19t.html>

'A cynic might argue that the miner's newfound interest in the poor seems to have occurred at precisely the time that rich countries have started turning away from coal. A real cynic might argue that blaming climate activists for ruining the lives of poor people was too good a wedge for the miners to ignore.

But a well-paid spin doctor working for the miners can take such cynicism in their stride. Any industry that can fund climate sceptics to accuse NASA of being part of a 'warmist conspiracy' can easily keep a straight face while blaming environmentalists for global poverty.'

Some *Clean Coal* myths exposed: "...The amount of energy you need to apply to a coal to remove the non combustible material from the coal, make it very very difficult indeed in terms of the engineering and in terms of the cost for that to be an economical proposition" Ted Pickering, NSW coal engineer. Background Briefing Sun 9th Nov @ 8am Radio Nat

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/background-briefing-clean-coal/5873446>

'The Indian environmentalists have a problem not only with the Carmichael mine, but also with Adani's actions in general. Steve Austin spoke to Executive Trustee of the Conservation Action Trust in India Debi Goenka who is in Queensland to campaign against the mine.'

(abc Mornings 612 23rd October 2014: 'Why Indian Environmentalists are objecting to a Queensland Mine')

http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2014/10/why-indian-environmentalists-are-objecting-to-a-queensland-mine.html?site=brisbane&program=612_morning

http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2014/10/why-indian-environmentalists-are-objecting-to-a-queensland-mine.html?site=brisbane&program=612_morning

http://www.globalresearch.ca/shale-fracking-is-a-ponzi-scheme-this-decades-version-of-the-dotcom-bubble/5402951?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=shale-fracking-is-a-ponzi-scheme-this-decades-version-of-the-dotcom-bubble

(Global Research 19th Sept 2014: 'Shale Fracking is a Ponzi Scheme This Decade's Version of the Dotcom Bubble')

'....Drillers are caught in a bind. They must keep borrowing to pay for exploration needed to offset the steep production declines typical of shale wells. At the same time, investors have been pushing companies to cut back. Spending tumbled at 26 of the 61 firms examined. For companies that can't afford to keep drilling, less oil coming out means less money coming in, accelerating the financial tailspin

“Interest expenses are rising,” said Virendra Chauhan, an oil analyst with Energy Aspects in London. **“The risk for shale producers is that because of the production decline rates, you constantly have elevated capital expenditures.”**

And Tim Morgan – former global head of research at Tullett Prebon – explained last month at the Telegraph:

We now have more than enough data to know what has really happened in America.

If a huge number of wells come on stream in a short time, you get a lot of initial production. This is exactly what has happened in the US.

The key word here, though, is “initial”. The big snag with shale wells is that output falls away very quickly indeed after production begins. Compared with “normal” oil and gas wells, where output typically decreases by 7pc-10pc annually, rates of decline for shale wells are dramatically worse. It is by no means unusual for production from each well to fall by 60pc or more in the first 12 months of operations alone.

Faced with such rates of decline, the only way to keep production rates up (and to keep investors on side) is to drill yet more wells. This puts operators on a “drilling treadmill”, which should worry local residents just as much as investors. Net cash flow from US shale has been negative year after year, and some of the industry’s biggest names have already walked away....'

Finally, the UNESCO World Heritage in Danger Committee has warned that the Great Barrier Reef is in such poor shape that it may end up on the World Heritage in Danger list unless further port expansions/industrialisation involving ongoing invasive dredging projects is limited. Because of the fragile state of the Reef, leading marine scientists insist the iconic Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and environs must be protected from further industrialisation in order to avoid another environmental basket case like Gladstone Harbour.

<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2014/s4115889.htm>

<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2014/s4115889.htm>

(abc AM 28th October 2014 'Academy of Science dismisses Great Barrier Reef protection plan')

'Leading Australian scientists have attacked a plan to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

The Queensland and Federal Governments have responded to United Nations' concerns about the reef by developing a protection blueprint for the next 35 years.

But the Academy of Science has slammed its lack of environmental targets and its silence on climate change.'

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/new-abbot-point-dredge-plan-to-dump-spoils-in-wetlands-20141029-11dppx.html-ixzz3HZKQJixv>

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/new-abbot-point-dredge-plan-to-dump-spoils-in-wetlands-20141029-11dppx.html#ixzz3HZKQJixv>

Sydney Morning Herald 29th Oct 2014: New Abbot Point Dredge Plan to Dump Spoils in Wetlands')

'The Abbott government appears poised to fast-track the approval of plans to dump millions of tonnes of dredge from a coal port expansion onto internationally significant wetlands.

Environment Minister Greg Hunt plans to assess the dumping of spoil from the proposed Abbot Point port expansion on the nearby Caley Valley wetlands under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act using "preliminary documentation".'

'...Senator Larissa Waters, the Greens' environment spokeswoman, said it was "disgraceful" for Environment Minister Greg Hunt to opt for scrutiny that could be limited to merely desktop research. Queensland Premier Campbell Newman would be able to make the final call on the dumping proposal, she said.

"The Abbott and Newman governments realised that the community was not going to let them dump dredge spoil into the Great Barrier Reef so now they've moved on to the second dirtiest option and are closing their eyes to its environmental impacts," Senator Waters said.

"The stunning, internationally significant Caley Valley wetlands are habitat to threatened shorebird species, a fish breeding ground and an important filter for water running into the Great Barrier Reef," she said..'

Sincerely,

Jenny Chester