

20 June 2013

Dr Ian Holland
Committee Secretary
Community Affairs References Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Dr Holland

Re: Evidence by the Queensland Resources Council to the 11 June 2013 Brisbane Hearings of the Inquiry into the impacts on health of air quality in Australia.

In my role as Chief Executive of the Queensland Resources Council for the past 8 years I have appeared before several Federal Parliamentary Committee hearings. I see such appearances (usually backed by substantive submissions) as constituting an appropriate obligation on our organisation and the industry I represent to contribute constructively to a wide range of Committee inquiries into important public policy issues.

At such Committee hearings I have experienced robust questioning which I see as being a normal and appropriate part of the Committee inquiry process. My appearance before the Community Affairs References Committee hearings in Brisbane on 11 June 2013 was a good example of the expected robust questioning. It followed upon a substantial submission from my organisation which included an expert report from respected environmental experts, Katestone.

In my extensive experience with these Committee processes I have though never before been subject to the vilification and downright defamation perpetrated under privilege by Mr John Gordon of Stop Brisbane Coal Trains against myself and my organisation in his evidence subsequent to my appearance.

I am flabbergasted to find that Mr Gordon was allowed by the Committee Chair and Committee members to refer, without challenge, to myself and my organisation as 'truly crooked', 'specialising in deception' and 'disingenuous and deceitful'. If such statements were made in the Senate Chamber they could be challenged and would have to be withdrawn. However, the Committee Chair and members allowed these totally unjustified slurs and defamation to go unchallenged. This abject failure on the part of the Committee chair and members to call this witness to account certainly shakes my faith in the value of putting in the effort to contribute to your Committee processes.

For the record, and consistent with our submission and my evidence, the Queensland Resources Council seeks only to place before Committees such as this one factual evidence based on verifiable facts and science.

We are proud of the fact that we have funded independent air quality monitoring along the Western-Metropolitan rail corridor in southern Queensland and that the findings from this monitoring will be published for all to see. We realise that this transparency is viewed as quite threatening to those who seek to generate baseless fear and concern in the community. However, there can be no excuse for the resort to vilification and defamation facilitated before the Community Affairs Committee in Brisbane on 11 June 2013.

Yours sincerely

Michael Roche
Chief Executive