



CALL TO STAND UP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

You are no doubt aware that these are dark times for the environment. Governments at all levels are relentlessly pursuing a pro-economy, pro-development agenda without regards to the environmental (or indeed social) cost.

Environmental protection measures that have taken years, if not decades, to secure have been unravelled in a matter of months. Here are some examples of what has been happening.



Since coming to office the Queensland Government has:

- Amended the Vegetation Management Act to reintroduce clearing of native vegetation for 'high value agriculture' taking us back to the days of broad acre land clearing. It also allows clearing of vegetation to divert existing natural channels in a way that replicates the existing form of the natural channels. The changes were introduced by the Minister Cripps in a speech that was unsubtly called "Taking the axe to the Vegetation Management Act"
- Overturned a long standing policy of no uranium mining in Queensland.
- Amended the Nature Conservation Act to allow for the development of 'eco tourism' facilities within national parks. The amendments changed the purpose of the Act from being focussed on the primary purpose of conservation to now include a focus on social, cultural and commercial use of protected areas.
- Consistently attacked sustainable living incentives, including early reduction of the Solar PV feed in tariff, abolishing the Climate Smart program and abolishing the requirement for rainwater tanks on new dwellings.



Since coming to office the Federal Government has:

- Approved of Clive Palmers Waratah Coal project which will destroy the Bimblebox Nature Refuge, an 8000 hectare property that is privately owned and managed for conservation purposes under legally binding agreements with both the State and Federal Government.



- Approved the development of a new coal terminal at Abbott Point (north of Bowen) which will require dredging of 3 million cubic meters of seabed to be dumped on the Great Barrier Reef.

The Queensland Governments plans for the near future include:

- Consideration of an additional 46 new coal mines (more than doubling the number of mines in Queensland). The new mines will have a combined annual output of 494 MT/a which will increase global CO2 emission by a staggering 3.5%
- Consideration of a large number of Coal Seam Gas projects. Combined these projects are seeking approval for almost 30,000 CSG wells to be drilled which will extract up to 350 Gigalitres of water per year, an increase in extraction from the great artesian basin of almost 80%.
- Rewriting the SEQ Regional plan. The new plan (which will provide population targets for 2041) is set to demand an increase in population on the Sunshine Coast to more than 600,000 people (almost double our current population) and will remove the urban footprint that currently protects our region, particularly our rural areas, from poorly planned urban sprawl.
- Rewriting the Sustainable Planning Act to change its objective from 'ecologically sustainable development' to "economic development". The drafting is being rushed through without any community consultation, but the Minister has indicated he will 'consult the industry'.



Meanwhile the Federal Government:

- is considering handing over environmental approval powers to the states and territories. The result would mean no federal review of the environmental impacts of any developments in Queensland (or elsewhere in Australia). Had this situation been in place Minister Garrett would not have been able to stop the Traveston Dam.

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC) is at the forefront of the conservation fightback in Queensland. We are working with regional and national environmental organisations to prepare a coordinated and consolidated response across the State. It is clear to everyone within the sector that the only way to stop the current environmental onslaught is through good old fashioned people power.

If you're concerned about what is happening to our natural environment and are willing to stand up and take action to protect it please join over 1200 other Sunshine Coast residents and register as a campaign supporter with SCEC.

Register now at www.scec.org.au/register-details