

From the President

Hi EnvA members and supporters!

This is our first EnvA News for 2024, so happy new year! Let's hope it is a year of great decisions for our environment (including our climate).

In case you missed our social media post, EnvA did make some resolutions for the year (which we really hope to achieve!):

- Save koalas from new fossil fuel projects,
- Keep Blue Energy out of CQ,
- Fix Queensland's assessment process,
- Fight for meaningful climate action, especially no new coal and gas approvals, and
- Build community engagement and involvement in our work.

These are not easy goals, but we think they are critical if we are to protect our climate and our environment.

If you can help in any way, please let us know – there is always so much to do!

Every little bit of help means we can do even more to protect our environment and us!

Also to let you know this is my last President's report as I am handing the role to Tom Sjolund to fill until our next AGM in July.

I'm still here as a committee member and hope to see you at some of our upcoming events!

James York,
Out-going President



Great news at the end of 2023 Bad news at the start of 2024

From an EnvA perspective, the end of 2023 was fantastic!

Steven Miles, after taking the role of Premier, made some significant announcements for Queensland:

- The refusal of Clive Palmer's proposed Waratah coal-fired power station, and
- Setting a new and improved emission reduction target of 75% by 2035

But the good news hasn't continued into 2024

So far this year, the Queensland Government has provided approvals for the Winchester South Coal Mine and the Vulcan South Coal Mine. These two projects alone will clear nearly 1000ha of koala habitat, and thousands more hectares of other threatened species habitat including the greater glider, squatter pigeon and the ornamental snake.

And it is not just these two mines that have progressed this year. EnvA has made [submissions](#) on proposed extensions to the Blackwater North, Rolleston and Sonoma coal mines. These mines will also impact on hundreds of hectares of threatened species habitat, water quality and will also contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. More on these mines on page two of this EnvA News!

We know that Queensland is incapable of refusing any new fossil fuel projects despite the impacts on our environment and their rhetoric of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Our focus is now on pressuring the federal environment minister to use her powers to protect our threatened species, our environment, our climate and our Central Queensland communities and landholders.

ENVA'S NEW YEAR'S *Resolutions*

- ★ Save koalas from new fossil fuels projects
- ★ Keep Blue Energy out of CQ
- ★ Fix Queensland's assessment processes
- ★ Fight for meaningful climate action
- ★ Continue to build community engagement and involvement in EnvA's work.

Visit our website at
www.envacq.org
to find out more



The Queensland government continues to support new coal and gas projects

Blackwater Coal Northern Extension

This one came as a surprise to us! The BHP-Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) recently sold the coal mine to Whitehaven and there was no mention of any proposed extension.

The idea is to add another 3,760ha to the current mine to increase production rates and have access to an additional 220 million tonnes of coal. It is anticipated that this will extend the life of the mine from 2029 until 2085 – another 60 years!

Like most coal mines, Blackwater North extension will clear the habitat of threatened species such as the koala, squatter pigeon, ornamental snake and the Australian painted snipe (pictured above). And the mine will produce significant greenhouse gas emissions placing even further on these animals and special places like our national parks and the Great Barrier Reef.



Breaking and exciting news!

As expected, this project will be assessed under the EPBC Act as a controlled action. The exciting part is that while many coal mines are assessed on their impacts on threatened species and community and water, this project will also be assessed on the impacts it will have on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and National Heritage Places!

We think this is the first time ever that a coal mine proponent in the Bowen Basin will have to address the wider impacts on our environment and not just local impacts. The only other one we know of was Adani's Carmichael coal mine in the North Galilee Basin.

A little win which we hope to turn it into a big win!

Sonoma East coal mine extension

This is a relatively small addition to the Sonoma coal mine. They are seeking a new mining lease and an amendment to their approval.

The additional area they are wanting is 73.7ha which will increase the size of the tenement area to about 2,300ha.

Unfortunately, the public was not provided with very much information to inform our submission. From what we can gather, koalas and squatter pigeons will be impacted, as will three threatened communities black ironbox, *Eucalyptus populnea* with brigalow, and regulated vegetation intersecting a watercourse.



There was no rehabilitation plan, no offsets and no assessment of greenhouse gas emissions in QCoal's application.

A local landholder tried to fight the previous expansion of mine through the legal system when QCoal tried to redirect Coral Creek which ran through the mine site and Mr Reed's property.

The [story](#) highlights the environmental damage that coal mines can do, and the significant impacts on local communities.

Rolleston North Coal Continuation project

Glencore has applied for an amendment to their environmental authority to expand the Rolleston Coal Mine. 😞

This is the fifth extension to the mine since it began in 2005. The mine already covers over 9,100ha and this next extension, if approved, will add more than 600ha to the current footprint. It is huge!

The survey work that was presented was very ordinary, but it was clear that the habitat of at least six threatened species will be cleared. This includes 424ha of koala and squatter pigeon habitat.



Another significant concern about this project is the rehabilitation plans – both for the existing footprint and the proposed extension.

- 😞 Glencore claims that they can't achieve the current required rehabilitation as there is not enough room to batter down the slope of their highwall, so they need the approval of this extra area to fix their poor planning.
- 😞 They also propose to leave final voids as a significant feature of the post-mining landform. Why? "It would not be economically feasible to backfill the voids."

The science is clear. If we are going to address climate change and meet emission reduction targets, no new coal and gas projects should be approved.

Rolleston is a thermal coal mine. There is more than enough approved thermal coal to see the world through the transition to a clean economy.

We can't keep clearing habitat, polluting our water, releasing more greenhouse gases and then walk away leaving huge mine scars on the landscape.

Get involved in some local research!

What does climate change mean to you?



Lynn Cazabon from CQU is keen to talk to people about their thoughts about our warming climate.

Her goal is to create an artwork that captures the community's feelings about the impacts of climate change locally, nationally and internationally.

If you are keen to help out and share your thoughts, please contact Lynn at l.cazabon@cqu.edu.au or 0461299119.

What do you think about green hydrogen as a clean fuel?



Lachlan Dorrian is a PhD student from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Adelaide.

He is here in Central Queensland until the end of April and is keen to talk to people about their thoughts on the positives and negatives of the potential green hydrogen developments in our region.

If you are keen to share your thoughts, please contact Lachlan at lachlan.dorrian@adelaide.edu.au.

Would you restore coastal wetlands on your property to earn carbon credits?



Rifaee Rasheed (Rify) is a Research Fellow at Deakin University's Blue Carbon Lab.

She is conducting a nationwide survey to understand landholder's concerns and challenges to restore coastal wetlands on their properties.

If you are keen to participate and learn more about carbon credits, please contact Rify at rifaee.rasheed@deakin.edu.au or 0459 825 830.

Fixing our national environmental laws

The Federal government is rewriting Australia's environment laws and seeking public input on the new proposed "Nature Positive Act".

From EnvA's perspective, there are some good changes, but also some big gaps and loopholes which need to be fixed so we end up with environmental legislation that really does protect our environment!

The positive changes

- The creation of a new body called Environment Protection Australia (EPA) which will be responsible for decisions about actions that impact on nationally important environmental matters.
- Definitions of "unacceptable impacts" which will not be able to be approved by the EPA, and
- The creation of "National Environmental Standards" for nationally protected matters, community consultation, biodiversity offsets, and First Nations involvement in environmental decisions.

The big gaps and loopholes

- There is no climate trigger to ensure that climate change impacts are considered in new projects.
- More use of the State governments in determining decisions through accredited approvals.
- No definitions of "unacceptable impacts" yet, and
- It includes a proposed "pay to destroy" scheme that will allow proponents to effectively purchase approvals instead of preventing environmental harm.

It would be great to get lots of submissions sent to the Aussie government to show them that communities value a healthy environment and climate!

It will take at least 10 minutes of your time, but those minutes might help improve our environment for years. We rarely get a chance to shape our environmental future so be a voice for our environment and give it a go!

[Have your say on the federal environment legislation reforms here!](#)

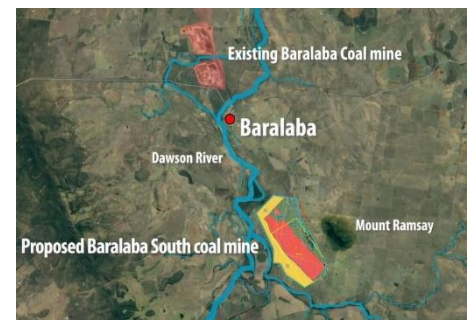
PS. EnvA has put together a submission based on the guidance and info from the 'bigger' conservation groups and environmental lawyers that have been actively engaged in the reform process. Our submission is [here](#) if you need some inspiration or words to complete the survey 😊.

Baralaba South coal

Yep, another coal mine proposed in the Bowen Basin! This one has a long history. Local landholders and the nearby communities have been fighting against this mine for more than a decade.

Comments on Baralaba Coal's Environmental Impact Assessment are now open, so this will be EnvA's next submission.

The potential for significant impacts to town and agricultural water are huge! It is time that decision-makers consider local communities and not just bow to the coal companies!



Our committee

These are the amazing group of people that now lead EnvA's direction and actions:

- ★ Tom Sjolund – President
- ★ Coral Rowston – Secretary
- ★ Matilda Widdowson – Treasurer
- ★ James York – member



Please let us know if you are interested in helping guide EnvA's future!

Get involved

Here is how you can help EnvA and the environment:

- ★ **Become a member:** It is free and numbers count! You'll also be included in all our member newsletters and get invitation to all our general meetings and events. Click [here](#) for our online membership application.
- ★ **Volunteer:** Whatever your skills, we would love to have you onboard! Many hands make light work! Join and put your hand up to help [here](#).
- ★ **Like and follow us on social media:** You can find our page [here](#). It will keep you up to date on what's happening at EnvA and local news related to climate change and government decisions.
- ★ **Donate:** Any donations will really help keep EnvA alive and active! Options for donating are on our website [here](#).
- ★ **Come along to our meetings and events:** As a member, you will be provided direct invitations. We also advertise these on our [social media page](#) and [web site](#).

Make a difference

EnvA is bringing the climate conversation to Central Queensland!

Light
snacks
provided

WHEN: Saturday 27 April 2024, 2-5pm

WHERE: Footlights Theatre and Restaurant
123 Rockhampton Rd, Yeppoon

The bar is
open for
purchases

Join us and other local environmental groups for an afternoon featuring:

- A panel of the most inspirational climate leaders to share their experiences and learnings on how we can all make a difference.
- A screening of "The Climate Changers" - a documentary which follows Tim Flannery on a journey across the Pacific talking to climate leaders to uncover the great work that can be done. The promo trailer can be viewed [here](#).

Come along and find out what you can do to help save this beautiful world of ours!

Tickets for this event are limited. Book your free ticket [here](#)!