



Office of the
Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef
Minister for Science and Youth Affairs

Our Ref: CTS 19730/22

1 William Street Brisbane Qld 4000
GPO Box 5078 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7140
Email environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au

23 December 2022

Dr Coral Rowston
Director
Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland
EnvA.CQ@outlook.com

Dear Dr Rowston

Thank you for your letter of 1 November 2022, jointly signed by key environmental groups, to the Honourable Meaghan Scanlon MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs regarding thresholds for requiring environmental impact statements (EIS) for new and expanding coal mines. The Minister has asked me to respond on her behalf.

The Minister acknowledges your concerns in relation to the decision not to require an EIS under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (the EP Act) for several mining projects being assessed (or recently completing assessment) by the Department of Environment and Science (the department).

Decisions about the level of assessment required are made proportionate to environmental risk and the complexity of a proposed project, and if a resource project does not require an EIS, the same environmental standards apply and a robust assessment undertaken. The EIS process replaces the information and notification stage of an assessment.

Important issues such as impacts to water resources, native vegetation and emissions are an important part of the assessment process and are carefully considered by the department. In addition, new, expanded or intensified regulated industrial activities such as mining in any Great Barrier Reef region must meet new discharge standards, introduced by the Palaszczuk Government, to ensure there is no increase in nutrient or sediment pollutant loads within the reef catchments.

New mining projects, including those you have referred to in your correspondence are also required to be publicly notified under the EP Act, providing community members the opportunity to have their say about a proposed project, including the ability to raise concerns about the project location and potential impacts to environmental values in the area. To make this process easier, members of the public can now subscribe to the department's website to be alerted when an EA application is available for public consultation at www.des.qld.gov.au/our-department/public-notice.

If you require any further information, please contact Mr Chris Loveday, Director – Technical and Assessment Services, Environmental Services and Regulation of the department on telephone 0407 671 084 or by email at chris.loveday@des.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Clare Manton
Chief of Staff
Office of the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef
Minister for Science and Youth Affairs