

Hon Murray Watt MP  
Minister for the Environment and Water  
c/- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

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18 June 2025

Dear Minister and the EPBC Referrals Team,

**RE: Hail Creek Eastern Margin Extension Project - request for call in for assessment under the EPBC Act**

Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland (**EnvA**) is a Central Queensland association concerned about the risks associated with coal mining, coal seam gas and climate change.

We are writing to you regarding the Hail Creek Holdings Pty Ltd (**the Proponent**)'s proposed Eastern Margin Extension Project (**the Project**) which would provide for the Hail Creek Open Cut Coal Mine (EPBC 2006/2506 and EPBC 2014/7240) in the in the Mackay-Nebo region of Central Queensland.

The Proponent recently applied to amend Environmental Authority EPML00661913 (**EA**) for this Project under the *Queensland Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

EnvA made a [submission](#)<sup>1</sup> on the EA amendment application, noting that the proposed Project is likely to have significant impacts on several Matters of National Environmental Significance (**MNES**, yet has not been referred for assessment under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Protection Act 1999* (**EPBC Act**).

The MNES that were identified by the proponent include:

**Listed threatened species and communities (ss 18 and 18A)**

- 599.55ha of koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) habitat - Endangered
- 600.17ha of squatter pigeon (*Geophaps scripta scripta*) habitat - Vulnerable
- 16.9ha of greater glider (*Petauroides volans*) - Endangered
- 83.5ha of ornamental snake (*Denisonia maculata*) habitat – Vulnerable
- 0.5ha of black ironbox (*Eucalyptus raveretiana*) - Vulnerable
- 4ha of Brigalow (*Acacia harpophylla* dominant and co-dominant) - TEC
- Semi-evergreen vine thickets of the Brigalow Belt - TEC

The Project will also remove koala habitat that intersects with a Statewide Biodiversity Corridor, which connects to Homevale National Park, that is likely to impact on koalas within the park.

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<sup>1</sup> [Submission on the application for a major amendment to Environmental Authority \(EPML00661913\) relating to an extension of the Hail Creek Open Cut coal mine \(Application: A-EA-AMD-100576264\)](#)



## **Protection of water resources from coal seam gas development and large coal mining development (ss 24D and 24E)**

The Project would have significant and permanent impacts on water resources, including:

- Diversion of 1.5km of Hail Creek and the construction of additional levees and drains to protect pits and final voids from water ingress.
- Water discharges of between 500 and 2,000 ML/year for the duration of mining activities.
- Disturbance to Brumby Waterhole - a permanent surface water feature located on a tributary of Hail Creek. The proposed new mining areas—including the Homevale Pit and the northern extension of the Exevale Pit—are situated within 500 m of the waterhole. The waterhole also holds significant cultural value for the Widi Traditional Owners.
- Potential impacts on black ironbox within the offset area due to hydrological changes.
- Adverse impacts on 128.45ha of terrestrial groundwater dependent ecosystems.

## **Impact of greenhouse gas emissions on all MNES (except nuclear)**

The Proponent estimated GHG emissions of over 253 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>-e for the extended coal mine operations. The scientific consensus is unequivocal: expansion of fossil fuel production is incompatible with limiting global warming to safe levels.<sup>2</sup>

The continued accumulation of GHGs in the atmosphere has already altered Australia's climate, with direct and measurable impacts, including:

- Increased frequency and severity of heatwaves,
- Longer and more intense fire seasons,
- More severe flooding events due to altered rainfall patterns,
- Repeated mass coral bleaching events on the Great Barrier Reef, and
- Prolonged and intensified drought conditions.

These climate-driven changes directly threaten the survival of already-vulnerable species and ecosystems. In light of Australia's obligations under national environmental law and international climate agreements, further fossil fuel expansion must be scrutinised for its cumulative environmental impacts.

## **Request for Ministerial intervention under section 70 of the EPBC Act**

Given the scale and severity of likely impacts on MNES, we respectfully request that you exercise your powers under **section 70 of the EPBC Act** to require the Proponent to refer the Hail Creek Eastern Margin Extension Project for assessment as a potential controlled action.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Kind regards,



Dr Coral Rowston  
Director  
Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland Inc.

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<sup>2</sup> [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2022](#)