

Submission regarding the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Retaining Federal Approval Powers) Bill 2012

While there may be duplication where the Federal and State Governments conduct separate environmental studies/enquiries, there is a wide community concern regarding the reliability of those enquiries.

Who sets the terms of reference and what pecuniary interests are involved?

With some States facing bankruptcy without mining, coal seam gas royalty revenue (for example) what chance is there of conserving damage to icons such as the Great Barrier Reef, preventing the extinction of the Koala, wiping out vast forests of old growth forest through open cut mining, the indiscriminate development of housing in areas of significant biodiversity?

The answer is NONE..... it's already happening, and the proposition of the Commonwealth handing complete powers to the States is ludicrous!

For example...what protection is there for an Australian icon, the Koala, where it is proposed to demolish a vast area of Kings Forest in the Tweed Shire NSW, for housing developments? The NSW Government is changing environmental planning with little publicity, and in a devious fashion. Tweed Shire Council would not even pass a regulation to ban dogs in a new development in a small attempt to protect Koalas from just one cause of its demise.

What sort of study has been done to protect Koalas or any other animal in the Leard Forest near Narrabri? The open cut mining that has already been established is horrific with more environmental vandalism planned! What is the point of a carbon tax or trading if trees are demolished to increase coal exports?

What sort of insanity is endemic amongst our political representatives, when they are prepared to sacrifice our scarce water resources in favour of coal seam gas extraction? The Great Artesian Basin has been a fantastic asset in the development of this Country, not to mention all our other aquifers that should be treasured...not destroyed!

We don't have such an abundance of arable land in Australia that we can afford to lose any of it....and it should be preserved for eternity, yet we have the greed of coal companies ruining vast tracts of arable land, especially in NSW and Queensland, but in Victoria, Tasmania, and I suspect in South and Western Australia as well.

Why would anyone consider placing a port facility in virgin Princess Charlotte or Bathurst Bay in far North Queensland? A place where there are sea grasses that feed the depleting Dugongs, turtles and other marine creatures. Where dredging will destroy coral reefs and marine life. Weipa is located on the western side of Cape York, where the environment is less precious, but still important. If another port is so necessary, locate it on the Western side!

The environmental state of this Country is at an all time low, and its future is bleak.

Federal Powers are just a hope that things will improve or at least some of the disastrous human activity will be curtailed.

Please don't give the States any more power to ruin the environment, too much damage has been done already.

Ken Brown