18th January, 2013.

Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications

Re: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Retaining Federal Approval Powers) Bill 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to place on record my apprehension about the proposed transfer of powers to the States in the approval of projects which may have profound environmental effects.

Queensland has a very poor record lately of caring for our Country, and with our Parliamentary structure it is easy for pressure to be exerted on the decision-makers, as some positions of power are held by people who are not responsible to an electorate, but to the politicians who placed them in their positions.

I live in Maryborough, where a strong campaign was mounted against the proposed Traveston Dam some years ago, by the previous State Government. Reports were presented to the State Government (on which decisions were based) which were flawed and in some cases plainly wrong. It was only because there was able to be a more independent umpire, in the form of the Federal Environment Minister that the flawed proposal did not go ahead.

I believe that the Federal Government has an overriding responsibility to ensure that places which have been designated as of environmental significance to our Nation are retained for future generations in the best possible condition. It is not good enough to say the States should be the final judges on what is important and what is worth saving and what can be made to turn a short-term profit. The nation as a whole is poorly served by piecemeal decisions which are affected by State Borders.

The Murray Darling River system is an example where National Issues are required to be considered, as multiple States are serviced by this river system & The Federal Government has overall control & administer in the National Interest.

Green corridors across borders are becoming even more important as retained vegetation becomes fragmented, and flora and fauna face reduced genetic input in 'islands'.

Please consider the entirety of the country and how it will be served in the future if these changes go ahead.