

Elisa Nichols
Director - Environmental Reform Initiatives
Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
Level 25, 400 George Street
Brisbane Q 4000

Dear Elisa

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) appreciates the opportunity to comment on proposed amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994.

More specifically CCIQ supports the introduction of a temporary emissions licence to relax or modify environmental conditions in response to an emergency event.

The series of floods and cyclone disaster events beginning in December 2010 saw 99 per cent of Queensland declared a natural disaster zone with many businesses either directly or indirectly impacted.

In February 2011 CCIQ released 'The Impact of the Queensland Floods on Business'. Further to this the then Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) commissioned CCIQ to examine the impact of the floods on business six months on.

The aim of this additional longitudinal study was to determine whether the extent of anticipated damages was realised, business experiences in accessing Government assistance and insurance, and what information was required to better prepare businesses for future natural disaster events.

CCIQ undertook this important project with the goal of helping the State Government and other stakeholders to further assist Queensland businesses in their recovery efforts and provide better services and assistance in the face of the next natural disaster.

A key finding of both of these reports was that businesses did not have to be directly impacted by the natural disasters to have experienced a significant and serious financial impact. A noticeable trend was that as time progressed, more businesses came to the realisation that the indirect impact of the natural disasters on revenue was much greater than first anticipated.

A key contributor to this trend was business (particularly contractors) reliance on mining operations, many of which were closed for extended periods until operators were able to negotiate transitional environmental programs (TEP) to allow mines to release water. As these mines were closed many Queensland businesses were in turn indirectly but equally negatively and very seriously impacted.

Accordingly CCIQ supports the proposed amendments to the Act to introduce temporary emissions licences. CCIQ supports the rationale behind these amendments to create certainty of process for affected parties including in anticipation of an emergent event.

CCIQ would be pleased to outline the above mentioned report findings should the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection believe it to be of benefit in preparing explanatory notes and guidance material to assist with the passage of the Amendment Bill before Parliament.

To this end please do not hesitate to contact me on (07) 3842 2279 should you wish to meet.

Yours sincerely



Nick Behrens
General Manager - Advocacy