

Procedure Office

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: [REDACTED]
To: Procedure Office
Subject: Roxby Downs (indenture Ratification) (Amendment of Indenture) Amendment Bill 2026

ATTENTION: Secretary, Select Committee on the Roxby Downs (indenture Ratification) (Amendment of Indenture) Amendment Bill 2026

Dear Secretary,

The Friends of Mound Springs group wishes to make this submission to the Select Committee regarding the Roxby Downs Amendment Bill 2026.

The Friends of Mound Springs (FOMS) comprise an award-winning voluntary group working, since 2006, with pastoral lessees, First Nations groups, the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board and the National Parks and Wildlife Service to help conserve and manage the internationally important mound springs associated with the Great Artesian Basin. The Friends group comprises broad membership, including members with extensive knowledge and experience relating to Mound Springs. The Friends group operates under the umbrella of the Friends of Parks and Nature Inc, coordinated through the SA Department for Environment and Water.

The Mound Springs of the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) are of international significance from an ecological, cultural and scientific perspective. They are of enormous importance to First Nations people, with the Mound Springs in the vicinity of Kati Thanda – Lake Eyre being central to the culture of the Arabana people. Mound Springs are listed as Endangered Ecological Communities under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.

The extraction of water from the GAB since the late 19th Century – for mining, horticultural, stock and domestic purposes - has led to the loss of an estimated 40% of the natural springs. In this context the water extraction from the Olympic Dam Borefield A has had deleterious impact on the Mound Springs and extraction from Borefield B, while more remote from the springs, is predicted to have longer term deleterious impacts.

Mr David Noonan, an Independent Environment Campaigner, has provided FOMS with a copy his submission relating to the Roxby Downs Amendment Bill 2026. The Friends of Mound Springs strongly endorse Mr Noonan's comments. The future of the Mound Springs in the Lake Eyre region as functioning ecosystems is heavily dependent upon the phasing out of water extraction from Borefield A and a steady transition away from water extraction from Borefield B. In FOMS' view, the draft Bill fails to give recognition to the significance of the Mound Springs and does not provide a clear basis for reducing water uptake from the GAB for the Olympic Dam Project. The prospect of continued substantial water extraction from Borefield B for the next ten years and possibly well beyond that is deeply concerning.

FOMS also supports Mr Noonan's comments about the hasty process associated with this legislation. The short opportunity for public input at this stage of the process is grossly inadequate.

In conclusion, we can only echo the objectives espoused recently by Conservation SA CEO Kirsty Bevan and quoted by Mr Noonan, including:

- a. Recognition of the Mound Springs of the GAB as a high-value ecosystem requiring elevated protection.*
- b. Closure as soon as possible of BHP Wellfield A water extraction operations that have directly impacted the Springs.*
- c. Transition of industrial scale BHP Wellfield B water extraction operations toward alternative water sources, such as desalination or recycled water, to protect the Basin.*
- d. Transparent timely reporting of extraction volumes, groundwater pressures and spring health and monitoring information.*

In FOMS' view, the draft Roxby Downs Amendment Bill does not provide a satisfactory basis for the achievement of these objectives. An alternative approach is needed that gives adequate recognition to the ecological values of Mound Springs, their deep cultural values for the Arabana people and the pressing need for action to reduce ground-water extraction from both Wellfields A and B. That alternative process should also incorporate a reasonable period for public discussion and input.

Our group would be happy to join in discussion about any of the matters raised above.

Yours sincerely

Simon Lewis
Secretary, Friends of Mound Springs


31 May 2026