



North Queensland Conservation Council

... the voice for the environment in North Queensland

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17 February, 2022

**To: Hon. Glenn Butcher MP
Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water**

Re: Cape Bowling Green erosion and river-bed levels on the Burdekin

Dear Mr. Butcher,

Last year in a meeting with Mr Scott Stewart MP (29 Nov. 2021), NQCC was informed that your department, in concert with DES, were to hold a technical seminar on the twin issues of “erosion of Cape Bowling green” and “rise in river bed level in the Lower Burdekin”. These are issues that NQCC has had a role in bringing into focus back in 2020, and continues to follow closely.

In that seminar, held in Townville (30 Nov 2021), contrasting views were presented on the processes by researchers from Tropwater, and a researcher working independently, Prof Eric Wolanski. The substance of Prof Wolanski’s report is now available as a published paper, and I attach it here for your convenience. We understood from Mr. Stewart that the technical seminar would be closely followed by a ‘stakeholder meeting’ to present the findings of the seminar. Thus, we request:

- (a) that the reports from the 30 Nov seminar be made available to NQCC; and
- (b) any plans for the stakeholder workshop

A very pertinent point in Prof Wolanski’s paper is that, to state decisively the status of both Cape Bowling Green and the Lower Burdekin, key data is still lacking. This reflects a broader lack of monitoring systems across the Burdekin Basin (rainfall gauges, hydrological flows etc.) arguably the most important catchment in Queensland.

To emphasis this at a basic level, NQCC members have noted several events in recent years when the Burdekin Falls Dam has risen considerably - with no major rainfall inputs recorded in the BOM gauges in the catchment. This is something that should quickly be rectified, particularly in this period of climate change when we can expect there to be changes in the incidence, intensity and duration of rainfall events.

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Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J G Connell', written in a cursive style.

John G. Connell
Head: Burdekin Basin sub-committee
North Queensland Conservation Council

cc. Scott Stewart (Minister for Resources)
Meaghan Scanlon (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef)
Chris Pam (President NQCC)
Crystal Falknau (Coordinator NQCC)