



MEDIA RELEASE

Queensland MPs urged to protect community rights

North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) has condemned the Parliamentary Primary Industries and Resources Committee's recommendation that the *State Development and Public Works Organisation (Critical Minerals) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026* be passed without amendment, despite widespread concerns raised by regional communities, landholders, conservation organisations and local governments.

The Bill would allow the Queensland Government to declare major projects "State strategic projects", giving Ministers broad powers to modify planning and environmental assessment processes and, in some circumstances, reduce public notification, consultation and review rights. NQCC says the changes would weaken important safeguards that ensure developments are properly assessed and communities have a meaningful say in decisions that affect them.

NQCC Coordinator Crystal Falknau said the recommendation ignored the voices of Queenslanders who stand to be most affected by the Bill.

"This Bill will have some of its greatest impacts here in North Queensland, where major mining and energy infrastructure projects are already transforming our landscapes," Ms Falknau said.

"This isn't just about speeding up approvals. It's about giving governments the power to change the rules for selected projects, while reducing the ability of communities to question those decisions."

NQCC has joined with other organisations to deliver an open letter signed by regional Queenslanders calling on Members of Parliament to reject the Bill in its current form.

"The hundreds of Queenslanders signing this letter aren't opposed to development. They simply expect development to follow the rules - protecting groundwater, wildlife habitat,



cultural heritage, productive farmland and the rights of landholders, while giving communities a genuine voice in decisions that affect them."

The Committee's own report acknowledges concerns that the Bill would expand Ministerial powers, reduce opportunities for public participation, weaken established assessment processes and place environmental, agricultural, cultural and property values at greater risk, before recommending the Bill proceed unchanged.

Ms Falknau said the decision now rests with Queensland's elected representatives.

"The Committee's recommendation is not the final word. Every Member of Parliament must now decide whether this legislation is truly in the best interests of Queenslanders and future generations, who will have to live with the consequences of these decisions."

NQCC said the Bill was particularly concerning for North Queensland because the region contains internationally significant natural environments, productive agricultural land and many of the State's largest current and proposed development projects.

"The Queensland Government is already investing in strategic planning for the North West Minerals Province to provide greater certainty for industry and communities. That's an approach that could strike the right balance – rather than stripping away safeguards completely.

"This Bill isn't really about economic development. It's about whether regional Queenslanders continue to have a meaningful voice in decisions that shape the future of our communities, and the places we all love."

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