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Dear Premier Palaszczuk,

**Re: Proposed future management of the Lake Eyre Basin (QLD)**

North Queensland Conservation Council is very concerned about the adverse impacts that unconventional gas mining will cause to the rivers and floodplains of the Channel Country. We ask that your government swiftly deliver on your 2017 election commitment to protect the rivers and floodplains of the Channel Country.

**About North Queensland Conservation Council**

*North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) is a peak organisation for the region and is part of a network of state-wide conservation councils. Established in 1974, NQCC is a not-for-profit incorporated association with a broad mandate to protect the "land, waters and atmosphere of the region." NQCC covers an area along the coast from Bowen in the South, North to Cardwell and inland to Mt Isa, through to the border of Northern Territory. We are the voice for the environment and represent over 1500 members and supporters.*

**Protecting Lake Eyre and Channel Country Rivers**

The Channel Country is within the western section of our range and we wish to see this area protected in order to preserve its unique biodiversity and to maintain existing industries such organic beef production, which has operated sustainably in the Channel Country for decades.

Due to its national and global ecological significance, it's vitally important that the Queensland Government protect the Channel Country rivers, which are among the last free flowing arid river systems on earth. These rivers contribute to the health and wealth of our state by supporting highly productive beef industry, containing important Indigenous cultural values and providing critical habitat to an abundance of endemic and migratory wildlife.

The upstream areas of the rivers need to be protected from large-scale irrigation projects, just as other parts of the rivers are under this framework. To preserve beneficial natural flows of rivers, protection needs to cover catchments as a whole.

While it will prohibit dams, open cut mines, largescale irrigated agriculture and some petroleum and gas activities, constructing gas wells, well pads and associated roadways will be permitted on the Channel Country floodplains under the proposals.

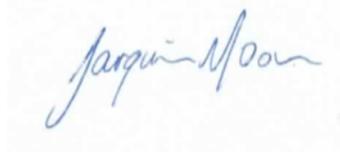
As it is these particular petroleum and gas activities that pose the greatest risk to ecological, hydrological, geomorphological and cultural values of the Channel Country, the proposal as it currently stands does not deliver to Governments election commitment to protect Queensland's pristine rivers.

Our organization's specific concerns regarding the proposal are:

1. **Infrastructure disrupting overland flows** - Construction of roads and infrastructure on the floodplains has the potential to disrupt overland flood flows that support the productivity of the floodplain areas. On the flat Channel Country floodplains even low above-ground structures can cause major changes in overland flows.
2. **Scarring the natural landscape** - A network of wells that create an industrialised landscape- this would threaten the integrity of the existing landscapes of natural rivers and floodplains that are greatly appreciated by both locals and tourists who visit the area and contribute to the economy.
3. **Contamination risks** - The risk of soil and water contamination from either well failures or from overspill or structural damage to waste water storage ponds during floods. The risk of soil and water contamination is a serious threat to the Channel Country's 'clean and green' beef industry.
4. **Vast quantities of water used for industrial activities** - Drilling and fracking unconventional gas wells requires large volumes of water that in the case of the Channel Country will be taken from the Great Artesian Basin. The communities of the region are dependent on water from the Great Artesian Basin and this needs to be a carefully managed resource.

There is broad community and stakeholder support for protecting the rivers and floodplains of the Channel Country, including local pastoralists, traditional owners, scientists and conservationists. The Queensland Government has every reason to implement the necessary protection as outlined in this letter for the long-term health and viability of the Channel Country.

Kindest regards,



Tarquin Moon  
NQCC Campaigns Manager