



Steven Miles
DEPUTY PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND

WORKING TOGETHER FOR QUEENSLAND

28 October 2020

Riley Rocco
Coordinator
Western Rivers Alliance
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Dear Riley

Thank you for your letter of 10 September 2020 regarding the future management of the Lake Eyre Basin. The Palaszczuk Labor Government's strong health response to the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that we can now start to deliver our plan for economic recovery. A re-elected Palaszczuk Labor Government will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure the natural and cultural values of this area are protected while supporting economic recovery and creating jobs.

Since 2015, our government has taken strong, sensible action to repair the damage done to Queensland's environmental protections under the former LNP government – and to do so in a way that creates jobs.

Queenslanders will not forget the LNP's disastrous record on the environment and threatened species. Under the previous LNP Government habitat loss quadrupled when they tore up Labor's vegetation management laws in 2013. The Palaszczuk Labor Government is proud to have reinstated Queensland's sustainable vegetation management laws. We know the LNP will reverse these changes once again.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government has fulfilled our commitment to release a protected area strategy for Queensland. The *Queensland's Protected Area Strategy 2020-2030: Protecting our world-class natural and cultural values* (the Strategy) establishes the strategic direction for protecting, growing and managing Queensland's protected areas.

The release of the Strategy is supported by an initial investment of \$60 million including:

- \$28 million for strategic land acquisitions to grow the public protected area estate;
- \$8 million to support landholders to establish and maintain nature refuges and special wildlife reserves on their land; and
- doubling the number of Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers to 200.

The LNP's record on protected areas was to cut over 60 ranger positions when they were in government, reducing capacity for the important work of caring for protected areas.

In December 2019, our government made a commitment to ensure the protection of streams and floodplains in the Queensland section of the Lake Eyre Basin by returning the protections that existed in the Wild Rivers framework. We also commenced targeted stakeholder consultation on that basis. While that consultation commenced in 2019, it was postponed in February 2020 due to COVID-19.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government is committed to ensuring that all stakeholder voices, including those of Traditional Owners, are heard in this policy process.

If re-elected, our government will establish a Lake Eyre Basin (Qld) Stakeholder Advisory Group to discuss the proposed framework and inform the development of a consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS).

The Advisory Group will:

- provide perspectives on the scope and options to be considered
- assist in identifying the costs and benefits of options being considered
- identify any risks or barriers to consultation and/or implementation of proposed options
- coordinate dissemination of information to their sector members.

Members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group will include Traditional Owners, industry bodies, environment groups, local government, scientific experts and government departments.

Further, should the Government be returned we will release both the Independent Expert Scientific Panel report and CSIROs *Assessment of scientific knowledge of shale gas and shale oil potential impacts* report when the Stakeholder Advisory Group is established.

I would like to thank Western Rivers Alliance for your ongoing involvement in the protection of the Lake Eyre Basin. If re-elected, we look forward to working with you and other stakeholders to ensure the most appropriate protections are in place.

Now is not the time to risk the LNP's cuts and environmental vandalism. Queensland's ongoing economic, environmental and health recovery requires leadership and stability, and Deb Frecklington and the LNP are a risk to our recovery and the environment.

I urge you to communicate this message with your members and supporters.

Yours sincerely



STEVEN MILES MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services