



The Hon. John Barilaro MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional New South Wales
Minister for Industry and Trade

Ms Helen Minnican
Clerk of the NSW Legislative Assembly
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

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Dear Ms Minnican

Thank you for forwarding the petition submitted by Ms Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Lismore, on 9 June 2021, which calls for all mineral exploration and mining in the Clarence Valley and surrounding local government area to be stopped.

I understand the petitioners' concerns about mineral exploration and the potential impacts any future mining could have on the area. As set out in the NSW Minerals Strategy, the NSW Government supports the sustainable growth of the state's mining sector, particularly for metals with high technology applications like copper and cobalt. I can advise that the Clarence Valley area currently has no mining proposals and only three companies are undertaking mineral exploration on active exploration licences (ELs).

The active ELs over the area were granted under the *Mining Act 1992* and provide the licence holder the right to prospect only. Conditions imposed on the licence regulate the type of exploration that can be carried out, and where these activities may occur. Exploration activities undertaken in non-sensitive areas and identified as having minimal environmental impact can be carried out without further approval. Higher intensity activities, activities in sensitive areas or activities that have the potential to affect threatened species or ecological communities require further approval.

There are stringent assessment processes in place for the approval of these types of activities. Licence holders are also required to rehabilitate areas disturbed by exploration activities and must provide security sufficient to cover the rehabilitation costs in the event that they default on this obligation.

An exploration licence does not provide any right to mine. If a licence holder decides in the future to apply for a mining lease, a development consent under the NSW planning framework is required. All mining proposals are subject to a rigorous, merit-based assessment process, including a detailed assessment of environmental issues such as the impact on water and biodiversity and community consultation. Any development consent granted includes conditions to manage potential impacts.

As the petition has more than 10,000 signatures, it will be debated in the Legislative Assembly on 5 August 2021 at 4pm.

Should the petitioners have any questions about this matter, they are welcome to contact Ms Kristina Erzikov, Director Resources Policy at Mining, Exploration and Geoscience on (02) 9274 6114.

Yours sincerely

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