



*A voice for the environment*

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## **ALPHA COAL – STREAM DIVERSIONS**

Conservationists are concerned about the expansion of coal mining into the Galilee Basin. Alpha Coal, along with five other massive mine proposals would totally change the landscape and stream flows of the Belyando River catchment.

Capricorn Conservation Coordinator, Michael McCabe said, “Alpha Coal would be an extremely large coal mine with four pits and a strike length of 24km of open cut. It is proposed to extract a minimum of **900 million tonnes of thermal coal** over the 30 year + life of the mine.”

“The burning of this coal would produce around **2.3 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas** (carbon dioxide) over the next 30 years. This would represent approximately 4 years of Australia’s current total annual emissions of carbon dioxide.”

“Alpha Coal alone would cause the destruction and loss of habitat associated with **46 kilometres of stream diversions**; Lagoon, Spring and Sandy Creeks. This would result in the loss of many hectares of vegetation in an environmentally sensitive area. The proposed mine forms part of a broader landscape scale wildlife corridor. The movement of wildlife between the Nature Refuge located to the south, and the Cudmore National Park and Resource Reserve the north of the project area will be impeded.”

“The Queensland Coordinator general acknowledges that more investigation is needed into local cumulative impacts, particularly stream diversions. Alpha Coal has committed to rehabilitation of riparian areas. However CCC considers that the experience in Central Queensland with rehabilitation efforts, given the vagaries of the weather and time taken for plant and animal communities to re-establish, will mean a very long term and uncertain ecological recovery.”

“The Galilee Basin mines will alter the aquifers, streams and wetlands of the Belyando River which flows into the Burdekin before entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

Despite a century and a half of land clearing and open cut mining, the science of all the influences on water quality and ecological processes on our rivers is still poorly understood.”

“Accumulative impacts are never properly taken into account when these projects are approved. Apart from local stream impacts, the six massive coal mining project proposals in the Galilee Basin will compete for the limited water supply from the proposed dam on the Connors, the Fitzroy Basin’s only remaining ‘wild river’.”

“The threat to Fitzroy water quality and flows and to vulnerable species like the endemic Fitzroy River Turtle *Rheodytes leucops* won’t be considered, not even as ‘collateral damage’, when Alpha Coal and the five other Galilee Basin mine proposals are assessed.”

“Central Queensland residents anxious about Fitzroy water quality need to know that our whole system is under threat from the Nathan Dam (on the Dawson River near Taroom), Connors River Dam, Rookwood Weir and the raising of Eden Bann Weir. The water from these proposals is virtually all for mining and industry, not food production. The water, will be diverted outside the Fitzroy system; west to Alpha, south to Wandoan/Chinchilla, and to Gladstone.”

“The diversion of waters from the Fitzroy system means CQ gets none of the assumed benefits yet all of the ecological impacts such as loss of connectivity, reduced fish passage, loss of remnant riparian vegetation and reduced flushing of contaminants and natural salts.”

“Coal mines have already diverted 100s of kilometres of streams and will leave 100s of voids filled with potentially contaminated water. While the understanding of all the influences on the Fitzroy system has improved since the disastrous mine water discharges in 2008, the mega Galilee Basin coal mines will bring an uncertain fate to the second largest Barrier Reef river system, the even less understood Burdekin.”

“Australia is under intense international scrutiny over our management of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. A strategic assessment of the processes used to assess, approve and monitor human impacts on the Great Barrier Reef is underway. Similarly the ecological capacity of our rivers to withstand ever increasing exploitation needs much more study and care,”  
Michael McCabe, CCC Coordinator said.