



**WARATAH COAL EIS - NATURE REFUGE TO BE DESTROYED
BIZARRE OFFSET STRATEGY WORTHLESS**

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Waratah Coal's multi-billion tonne coal mine in the Galilee Basin near Alpha, shows that **Bimblebox Nature Refuge** will be devastated. Fifty-two percent or 4,000 hectares of Bimblebox will be cleared to make way for this massive open cut mine. The remainder of the Nature Refuge will be at risk of subsidence due to underground mining.

The 8,000 ha **Bimblebox** property was recognised 10 years ago by both the Federal and State governments as an excellent example of uncleared woodland in the Desert Uplands Bio-region. The Federal Government contributed over \$300,000 towards the purchase of the property on the condition that it was preserved in perpetuity. The State government declared the Bimblebox Nature Refuge to protect its importance as an intact natural ecosystem.

Bimblebox NR has become a well recognised site for research, for example into sustainable grazing practices, fire management, and woodland bird surveys, an important indicator of ecological health.

CCC Coordinator, Michael McCabe said, "We need answers from both levels of government about their commitment protecting Nature Reserves and their roles in ensuring ecological resilience."

"What is the Federal government going to do to make sure that **Bimblebox Nature Refuge** is not mined? Will the \$300,000+ of tax-payers money be recovered and re-applied to nature conservation if mining is allowed? What is the State government doing to protect their declaration of the Nature Refuge?"

"Waratah's solution to the destruction a Nature Refuge is quite bizarre," Mr McCabe said. "They are proposing a so called environmental offset to compensate for clearing half of **Bimblebox**. The deception is that the declaration of a Nature Refuge over an off-set area, gives it no more protection from mining than is available to the existing **Bimblebox NR**, zilch!" (ref: Waratah EIS Appendix 27 p.39)

"Is the State Government going to close the ridiculous 'offsets' loophole which gives no absolutely no protection to nature and which is being exploited by mining companies?"

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