



Hon Dr Steven Miles MP
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and
Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef

Ref CTS 25501/16

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Ms Paola Cassoni
President
The Bimblebox Alliance Inc
bimblebox@gmail.com

Dear Ms Cassoni

Thank you for your email of 28 September 2016 concerning Bimblebox Nature Refuge and your recent submission on the proposed new class of private protected area to be called a Special Wildlife Reserve.

I am very pleased to be able to advise you that the government is now progressing with changes to the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* to create this new type of protected area. Your views, and those of others who contributed to the consultation process, are being considered in the development of this mechanism. My intention is that a full assessment of all interests in land will be made when a Special Wildlife Reserve is proposed, and I see no reason why conservation values cannot be prioritised over other land use values where the situation warrants. Such decisions are made regularly whenever a national park is declared, and the same principles will apply to consideration of potential Special Wildlife Reserves.

In relation to your concerns about the approval process for the Galilee Coal Project, I can confirm that the next stage in the Environmental Authority (EA) decision process is the public notice and objections stage. The version of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* that was current at the time the application was first lodged (version 14 August 2012) states that the public notice and objections stage commences upon the issue of a mining lease notice by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to the applicant, Waratah Coal Pty Ltd. During this stage, the draft EA and application documents will be made available for public inspection and you may make an objection submission about the application, the draft EA for the application, or a condition included in the draft EA. Objections to the mining lease application may be lodged during this period. Any properly made objections lodged with the administering authority must be referred to the Land Court. I understand that the issue of the mining lease notice has not yet occurred.

Thank you for your kind offer to visit Bimblebox Nature Refuge. I would be pleased to explore opportunities to meet with you when I am next in the region. My office will contact you at that time to arrange a mutually convenient meeting.

I thank you once again for your outstanding commitment to protecting Bimblebox Nature Refuge and I look forward to working with you into the future.

I hope this information has been of assistance to you. Should you have further enquiries, please contact Mr Philip Halton, Chief of Staff in my office on (07) 3719 7330.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Miles', is positioned above the printed name.

DR STEVEN MILES MP
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and
Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef