

Runoff Repair Youth Bill 2009

Explanatory Notes

Objectives of the Youth Bill

The object of this Youth Bill is to establish a system of auditing and management to monitor the health of Queensland's waterways and associated ecosystems. The focus of this Youth Bill will be the previously seldom addressed pollutants that now affect our State's waterways—fertilizers and mining run-off.

Over recent years there has been a considerable amount of research into the negative effects felt by our State's rivers, lakes, dams and reefs. A frequent cause of a lot of this damage to our State's waterways and systems is non-source point pollutants or 'run-off' from agrarian and mining operations. The over-use of fertilizers and general contaminants from farms and mines has gradually collected and are now causing serious damage in the form of some unlikely and previously unrecognised environmental and ecological phenomena. These include not just water contamination (which has its own obvious and well known consequences) but also other processes, such as eutrophication, which results in the unsustainable growth of algae due to fertilizer run-off from agrarian properties in waterways and associated systems including the Great Barrier Reef. These processes all harm the environment and its associated industries, particularly tourism, which constitute a large part of our revenue.

With this Youth Bill, farmers, agriculture corporations and mining enterprises will all be educated and held responsible for any environmental negligence they exhibit. Regular audits will be conducted on all waterways and catchments of interest, as outlined by this Youth Bill. If a problem is found, then all associated properties to that waterway will be audited. Management plans will be administered providing the knowledge and strategies to run an efficient and eco-friendly operation.

The Environmental Protection Agency will be responsible for the auditing and monitoring required by this Youth Bill. The EPA will have powers to administer fines and other penalties to non-compliant individuals. If need

be, there are measures to involve the judicial system for a system of appeals and for high level, criminal non-compliance with this Youth Bill.

With the *Runoff Repair Youth Bill 2009*, we hope to see a drastic improvement in the quality and sustainability of not only of our State's precious waterways and catchments, but also an improvement in the efficiency and sustainability of our mining and agriculture industries. As a result, not only will the aforementioned industries benefit greatly in the long run, but associated and dependent industries will also receive a boost including, but not limited to, tourism, eco-tourism, fishing, other non-agrarian primary industries and 'eco-jobs', such as environmental planning and surveying used in the implementation of this Youth Act.

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