



**Hon. Diane Evers MLC**  
Member for the South West Region

Attn: Mrs Maddison Evans, Committee Clerk  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Committee Members,

**PETITION NUMBER 098 – PROTECT LAKE JASPER FROM MINING OF ANY TYPE AND REINSTATE LAND SURROUNDING THE LAKE BACK INTO D’ENTRECASTEAUX NATIONAL PARK**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs regarding Petition No. 098 - Protect Lake Jasper from mining of any type and reinstate land surrounding the lake back into D’Entrecasteaux National Park. I confirm that I wish the Government/Committee to inquire into the matters raised in the petition. To the best of my knowledge, the issues described in this petition have not been taken to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (Ombudsman).

It is vital that we protect Lake Jasper, the largest freshwater lake in Western Australia. It is a biodiversity hotspot – it is one of the five most important wetlands for waterbirds in the south west and a biological reservoir for native freshwater fish. It is the only known underwater Aboriginal archaeological site in Australia. The excise of 308 hectares of pristine Class A Reserve from the D’Entrecasteaux National Park has threatened these cultural and environmental values and brought no economic benefit. It was a poor decision and it is time to rectify that mistake.

Mineral sand mining projects in the area threaten the environment. A major issue is that pyrite (a sulfide mineral) is known to occur at the Lake Jasper site. When pyrite is exposed to air in the presence of water, acid is produced<sup>1</sup>, leading to Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS). These can be difficult and expensive to manage. The Lake Jasper area has been classified by the Department of Water as Risk Class 1a (Red) – that is, there is a high to moderate risk of ASS occurring within 3m of natural soil surface that could be disturbed by most land development activities.

The impact of ASS and other technical and environmental challenges encountered in the region also bring substantial business risks. In 1999 BHP suffered financial losses experimenting with its short-lived mineral

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mindat.org/photo-771240.html>



sands project in Beenup due to ASS and other factors such as clay fines disposal<sup>2</sup>. The mine had to be closed, and in 2001 the costs of clean-up and the loss of capital associated with the failed project were estimated to be \$300 million<sup>3</sup>. Other environmental issues that concerned community members have highlighted to me include siltation, pollution, chemical spills, the spread of dieback, and changes to the water table, particularly since mining operations could encroach to within 300m of the lake.

For these reasons, the Denmark Environment Centre spent 12 years fighting Cable Sands' Lake Jasper mining proposal, with assistance from the Environmental Defenders Office. Ultimately, after long and complex proceedings, the Supreme Court deemed that objections to mining proposals on environmental and public interest grounds were valid<sup>4</sup>. In addition, the EPA rejected a number of draft reports from Cable Sands on the grounds that environmental issues had not been adequately addressed. Cable Sands withdrew its application for a mining lease at Lake Jasper. Any proponent of a new mining application will face the same barriers.

Cultural issues are also of enormous concern. Indigenous custodians of Yoondadadup country, where Lake Jasper is situated, ask that land surrounding the lake be returned to the national park. Indigenous elders explain that Yoondadadup is the "creation place" of the Pibulumun Nation, and families have had continuous connection to the Boodjara (country). Elder Wayne Webb has explained that Pibulumun Wadandi Elders and cultural custodians, and other neighbouring clans of Aboriginal people, are deeply disturbed that their cultural beliefs and traditions could be severely impacted upon by any mining activity.

I support the call from the D'Entrecasteaux Coalition and Indigenous custodians for Strategic Sands to relinquish the Mining Lease application M70/1385. I support the petitioners' request that the legislative Council moves to ensure that no mining applications for exploration or leases are approved and that no mining activity takes place in the area. I oppose any approvals of any applications for a mining lease in the area of Lake Jasper on the South Coast of Western Australia, and urge that this ecologically significant site is reinstated as part of D'Entrecasteaux National Park.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Diane Evers MLC  
**Member for South West Region**

---

<sup>2</sup> Another technical difficulty was that clay fines were not settling out as fast as required. BHP reported that despite exhaustive investigations, no environmentally and economically feasible solution was identified (see <https://www.mindat.org/photo-771240.html>). High levels of clay and sand abrasiveness also caused plant maintenance problems, leading to a maximum 60% capacity of plant operations (<https://www.mindat.org/loc-272647.html>)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.businessnews.com.au/article/Beenup-clean-up-blow-out>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.edowa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2016/11/newsletter-2010-09.pdf>