

To the Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs



8 September 2011

**Re: Petition no 124 – Proposed Mining near Horizontal Falls,
Buccaneer Archipelago**

Dear Mr Ellis,

Thank you for the opportunity to present a brief submission to petition no. 124. This petition was promoted by me as a private citizen who is deeply concerned about the potential environmental impacts on the marine and terrestrial environment by the proposed copper mine and as owner/operator of Horizontal Falls Seaplane Adventures which has been operating in the area for the past 10 years.

We are deeply concerned that since the petition was tabled in the Legislative Council on the 10th August, Pegasus Metals has moved forward with its proposal with an aggressive exploration programme 2.5km to the west of the Horizontal Falls. This is despite the inclusion of Talbot Bay, Dugong Bay and the Horizontal Waterfalls on the National Heritage List on the 31st August 2011.

We feel that the proposed mining operation should be reassessed under the EPBC Act and that all exploration and mining operations should be halted until a comprehensive environmental assessment can be carried out.

Some of the unique features of the area include:

1. Extensive coral reef assemblages around the Horizontal Waterfalls and in Talbot Bay, including Turtle Reef, which links Molema Island with the mainland, and is one of the largest reef platforms on the Kimberley coast.
2. Unique mangrove systems in Cyclone and Poulton Creeks.
3. Extensive freshwater springes that feed into the marine environment
4. Extensive tropical vine thickets and remnant rainforests that are centred on permanent springs in the area.
5. Many significant Aboriginal sites.
6. Spectacular waterfalls and geological features that arise from the impact of the Kimberley basin with the Yampi Peninsula.
7. Spectacular tidal pinch rapids at the Horizontal Waterfalls, which the BBC's David Attenborough described as "One of the greatest wonders of the natural world".
8. Extensive seagrass areas that are important to dugong and snubfin dolphins.
9. Dugong Bay is one of the least impacted areas of the Kimberley coast.

PUBLIC

The combination of these factors has made the Talbot Bay area a unique and world class tourist destination that now generates over AUD \$20 million per year in tourist revenue for the Kimberley and Western Australia. The threats posed by the proposed mining operation will place all of this at risk.

We strongly urge the Standing Committee to consider the introduction of new legislation that allows for the registration of special places in Western Australia, such as the Horizontal Waterfalls, that are off limits to mining and industrial development in perpetuity, or until they can be considered for inclusion on the tentative list for World Heritage protection.

Everyone who visits the Horizontal Waterfalls, Talbot Bay and Dugong Bay is moved by the power and beauty of this region.

I hope that these comments will assist your committee with its investigations.

Yours sincerely,
Troy Thomas

PUBLIC