



Proposed changes to Queensland mining approvals: What landholders need to know

Proposed changes to Queensland's mining laws could change how landholders are notified about proposed mining operations, how they can object, and whether their concerns will be heard by the Land Court of Queensland.

On 15 September 2026, the Queensland Government introduced the *Mineral Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 (MROLA Bill)* into Parliament. The MROLA Bill proposes significant changes to the way mining lease and associated environmental authority and progressive rehabilitation and closure plan (PRCP) applications are assessed.

The MROLA Bill is **not yet law**. It has been referred to the relevant parliamentary committee for consideration.

For landholders, the most important issue is what these changes could mean if a proposed mine affects your property, access to your property, or surrounding land.

What could change for landholders?

The proposed changes would streamline parts of the mining approval process, including by combining some notification processes and limiting who can formally object to a proposed mining lease and draft environmental approval documents.

The key changes include:

1. One notification process instead of two

Under the current framework, a proposed mining lease and an associated environmental authority involves separate public notification processes.

The MROLA Bill proposes to combine these into a **single public notification process**.

For lower-risk mining proposals involving standard or variation applications, the MROLA Bill proposes removing public notification, submission and objection processes altogether.

For landholders: if you are made aware of a proposed mining operation affecting your property or surrounding area, it will be important to understand what type of application is being made and what rights you have to make an objection or submission about that proposal.

2. Not everyone will be able to object to a mining lease application

The proposed changes, if made, will limit who can object to a site-specific mining lease application.

A person will need to be an **"eligible entity"** to make a formal objection.

An "eligible entity" is a limited group of people and organisations directly connected to the proposed mining lease, including:

- an owner of land within the proposed mining lease area;
- an owner of land required for access to the proposed mining lease area;
- a relevant local government;
- certain infrastructure providers; or
- an owner or occupier of land within a proposed **125 km eligibility zone**.

This means that **owning or occupying land within 125 km of a proposed mining lease area may be relevant to your ability to object**, even if your property is not within the proposed mining lease area.

However, being an eligible entity does not mean that every concern can be raised as a formal objection.

3. The grounds for objecting will be narrower

The proposed changes would limit the grounds on which an eligible entity can object to a site-specific mining lease.

The *Mineral Resources Act 1989* limits the grounds upon which an objection can be made to largely technical matters, such as the proposed development and utilisation of the mineral resource and whether the area of the proposed lease is appropriate.

This is important because **being entitled to object does not necessarily mean that every concern about the potential impacts of a proposed mine will be dealt with as a formal objection under the mining legislation.**

Environmental concerns will also need to be addressed through the separate process.

4. Environmental authority and rehabilitation plans

The changes propose that an eligible entity will be able to object to a proposed draft environmental authority or PRCP under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994 (EP Act)*.

The MROLA Bill proposes that formal objections will be limited to the draft documents themselves or the relevant decision-making criteria under the EP Act.

There would also be an opportunity for **any person** to make a submission about a draft environmental authority or PRCP on broader environmental grounds.

However, the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation would have discretion as to whether those submissions are considered. Those submissions would also not result in a Land Court hearing.

What about the Land Court?

This is one of the more significant proposed changes for people who are concerned about a mining proposal affecting their land.

Under the existing framework, properly made objections that meet the relevant legislative requirements are referred to the **Land Court** for hearing and recommendation to the relevant decision-maker.

The MROLA Bill proposes to change this.

Instead of every qualifying objection automatically proceeding to the Land Court, the relevant decision-maker would have discretion to decide whether a matter should be referred to the Land Court.

The MROLA Bill does not set out specific criteria about when an objection may be referred to the Land Court, the result being that referral will depend on the circumstances of the particular application.

For landholders, this means that making a formal objection would not necessarily mean that you will have an opportunity to have that objection heard by the Land Court.

If a matter is referred to the Land Court, objectors would have the opportunity to put forward their case and participate in the consideration of the issues raised, including issues involving expert evidence.

What does this mean if you own land affected by a proposed mining project?

If you own or occupy land in an area where mining activity is proposed, these changes could affect:

- whether you receive notice of a proposed mining operation;
- whether you are entitled to make a formal objection;
- the grounds on which you can object;
- whether your environmental concerns can be considered as part of the formal objection process; and
- whether your objection ultimately proceeds to the Land Court.

What should landholders do?

The proposed changes are still being considered by Parliament, so the position may change before any legislation is passed.

If you own or occupy land that could be affected by a mining proposal, now is a good time to understand how these proposed changes could affect your rights.

If you want to make a submission about the proposed legislative changes, you have until 12 October 2026 to do so.

In the event that the changes are made and you own or occupy land in an area where mining activity is proposed, we suggest keeping an eye on mining lease and environmental authority applications affecting your area.

If you receive a notice about a proposed mining operation, **do not assume that you have a long period of time to respond.** Objection and submission processes are subject to statutory requirements and deadlines.

Early legal advice can help you understand:

- whether you are an eligible entity;
- what rights you have to object or make a submission;
- what issues can properly be raised;
- what evidence may be required; and
- whether there are other avenues available to protect your interests.

Written by Anna Vella.

Please contact us if you would like to discuss the potential implications of the proposed reforms for your property or if you would like assistance preparing a submission to the parliamentary committee.

All references to legislation are references to the legislation current as at 24 Sept 2026.

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