

ARKAROOLA WILDERNESS SANCTUARY



From the ARK Alert 01/03/10

Mail to: DEHMiningReferrals@sa.gov.au

A Freudian slip, satire or gross insensitivity? Whichever it is, a return email address with the moniker *DEH Mining Referrals*, does little to inspire confidence in the public consultation phase of a policy development process that claims to be about balance. How should we interpret this latest development to publicly release *Seeking a Balance* submissions?

In an eleventh hour development, the government sent emails last week to *Seeking a Balance* respondents, requesting permission for the public release of their submissions. The emails were sent from DEH Mining Referrals, not from Conservation Policy and Programs, or a dedicated northernflindersproject@sa.gov.au address, either of which would have been more appropriate in the circumstances.

Because of the high level of interest in SaB, the Government has decided to make submissions public. As this was not intended nor planned for, submissions cannot be publicly released without respondents' permission. We have been advised that: *"It is your obligation to assess its content for any possible legal ramifications, for example a breach of confidence or defamation."* Should respondents elect not to make their submissions publicly available, only their name and organisation will be released on the website where submissions will be posted.
http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/minerals/public_notices/northern_flinders_ranges_project

Whatever the motivation for this late development, Arkaroola encourages all respondents to make their submissions publicly available. We have no other way of judging whether the public consultation process will have any bearing on the final recommendations made by the architects of the policy, to their Ministers. This is not a set of issues where a simple show of hands should determine the outcome: 251 for, 250 against, I think the "Aye's" have it. Predictably, shareholders and mining companies are likely to have argued strongly for greater access to iconic northern Flinders Ranges landscapes for mining, motivated by profits and personal wealth. However, those arguing for stronger protection, unpredictably, include geologists and geo-academics, as well as protected area managers, local government, tourism bodies including Australia's peak ecotourism association, conservationists, and traditional owners. For all of these groups, the issues are not about personal gains but rather, about a greater public good. Their submissions reflect our responsibility for the protection of natural systems that are already under stress, that they may be enjoyed by those who come after us.

Respondents should not be intimidated by the language in the email. Criticism of policy, of instruments used to inform the development of policy, and of company behaviour is justified. However, any content that cannot be defended, has no place in submissions.

We need a strong collective voice in the public domain if we are to protect Arkaroola's uplands from mineral exploration and mining. Please give your consent and reply by **Friday 12 March**.

For more information go to www.savearkaroola.com.au or www.arkaroola.com.au/breakingnews.php



From: DEH:
Mining Referrals
Sent: Thursday,
25 February 2010
4:07 pm
To: Arkaroola
Subject:
Permission to
publicly release
your submission

NORTHERN FLINDERS RANGES

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA