

- With the exception of mines under special Agreement Acts, there should be a review of the adequacy of current environmental consent for existing mines.
- The existing security deposit system should be essentially retained.
- Public participation should be sought in relation to proposed “significant impact” changes to major mines.
- QMC supports reforms that will mean better rehabilitation outcomes.
- Native title and cultural heritage should be addressed as part of a statewide regime.
- Any reforms to improve environmental regulation of the mining industry should be funded from consolidated revenue.

There is some indication that the Government has taken QMC’s points on board (see following article). Once Cabinet has made a final decision, drafting of the EPP and associated changes to legislation will occur, with the draft EPPs expected to be released for public comment early next year.

### **THE WARDEN’S COURT – NEWSFLASH**

Legislation is expected to be introduced into Parliament before the end of November 1998 to replace the existing Warden’s Court with a new Land and Resources Tribunal. At the time of writing (Tuesday, 10 November 1998) no draft Bill is available. However, it is understood that the Tribunal will have the following features:-

- It will be presided over by a President who will have qualifications of about Supreme Court judge level. The President will be assisted by a Judicial Registrar.
- There will be Deputy President of about District Court level.
- Sitting under the Deputy President will be 3 Referees - a Mining Referee (responsible for the straight forward ex-Mining Warden type work), a Mediation Referee and an Indigenous Issues Referee.
- There will be other panel members who can be called upon for their particular expertise - an ex-officio Land Court member, senior members and other members.
- For complex matters the Tribunal will sit as a panel of 3, presided over by the President.
- The Mining Referee will not deal with native title issues.

The legislation to set up the Tribunal will be required to support Queensland’s proposed alternative to the right-to-negotiate provisions in the *Native Title Act (Commonwealth)*. If the legislation is passed, the Tribunal may be in place by mid-1999.