1. Following major local flooding in January 2008, a number of coal mines in the Fitzroy River Basin were flooded. Several mines, including the Ensham coal mine, applied to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval to discharge mine affected flood waters.
2. In mid-2008 water monitoring indicated that salinity was increasing in waterways, dams and weirs downstream of the Ensham discharge.
3. In October 2008, the Premier appointed Professor Barry Hart as her independent advisor on this issue and the then Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation announced the EPA would undertake a study into the cumulative impact of mining on the health of the Fitzroy River for public release. Professor Hart presented a report reviewing the Fitzroy River water quality issues to the Premier in November 2008.
4. The EPA Study found that:
   * insufficient data exists to quantify the cumulative impact of mining water discharges on the Fitzroy River Basin;
   * ongoing monitoring and analysis is needed to develop a modelling program for assessing cumulative impacts;
   * using a risk assessment matrix, six mines were identified as being the highest contributors to potential cumulative impacts (Coppabella, North Goonyella, Goonyella Riverside, Millennium, Peak Downs and Ensham); and
   * discharge quality limits and operating requirements for coal mine water discharges under normal operation are vastly inconsistent and often do not reflect best environmental practice.
5. The Study also provides recommendations to improve the management of water in mining activities including reviewing and amending environmental authorities for water management/discharge for coal mines in the Fitzroy River Basin.
6. Cabinet endorsed the recommendations in the study entitled: *A study of the cumulative impacts on water quality of mining activities in the Fitzroy River Basin*.
7. Cabinet noted the Government’s response to the Hart Report.
8. *Attachments for release*
   * [A study of the cumulative impacts on water quality of mining activities in the Fitzroy River Basin](Attachments/Fitzroy%20River%20Basin%20cumulative%20impacts%20study.docx)
   * [Queensland Government’s response to Professor Hart’s Report on Fitzroy Water Quality](Attachments/Govt%20Response%20%20to%20Professor%20Harts%20Report.docx)