



The Hon Dr Anthony Lynham MP
Minister for State Development and
Minister for Natural Resources and Mines

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets
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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 24 March 2017 to the Honourable Dr Steven Miles MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, enclosing a copy of Petitions No. 2733-17 and 2679-16, as tabled in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. Minister Miles has forwarded your letter to me for my reply.

The petitions request that the Queensland Government (the Government) reverse its approval of Adani's Carmichael Coal Mine situated on the traditional lands of the Wangan and Jagalingou people. It suggests that the environmental impacts, including alleged contribution to global warming beyond two degrees Celsius and its impacts on the Great Barrier Reef, outweigh the promised economic benefits. The petitions also seek the Government's assurance that no taxpayer funds are allocated to infrastructure to support the mine, that water legislation is reinstated to protect the site's hydrology, and that the Government commits to transition to a clean energy future.

Resource projects are a major contributor to the Queensland economy and the Government plays an important role in ensuring such developments are ecologically sustainable. The Government has ensured that due process has been followed regarding the approval processes for the Adani Mine.

In relation to Native Title approvals, the project cannot proceed without the registration of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement between the Wangan and Jagalingou people and Adani. I note that a proposed Indigenous Land Use Agreement between these parties is currently before the Commonwealth Native Title Registrar.

Adani's mine, rail and port projects have been through numerous comprehensive assessment processes and detailed scientific and community scrutiny. The projects have met all Commonwealth and State environmental requirements to date. For the Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail project, almost 270 conditions have been placed on the project to protect the natural environment and the interests of landholders and traditional owners. More than 100 of these conditions relate to groundwater.

The Government has also reinstated appropriate regulation of groundwater taken for mining activities with the *Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016*. This legislation reverses the previous government's laws, which sought to deregulate the mining industry's groundwater take. The legislation ensures that the environmental impacts of groundwater taken as an unavoidable part of the resource operation (such as dewatering, which is required to provide safe operating conditions) will be considered and integrated into the environmental authority (EA). This will remove the need for a separate water licence while maintaining rigorous standards of assessment.

Projects that have obtained their EA without appropriate integration of groundwater impacts (advanced mining projects) will be required to obtain an associated water licence for dewatering in a groundwater regulated area, unless they already have a water licence or water permit for their take of this associated water. This will ensure that in every case, there has been a rigorous assessment process before the mine receives the limited right to take associated water. Additionally, it will also ensure that projects like the Carmichael Coal Mine will start and finish their approvals process under substantially the same regime, by securing an associated water licence under the *Water Act 2000*.

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM) granted an associated water licence with conditions for the Carmichael Coal Mine on 29 March 2017. The water licence will allow Adani to take a volume of water equivalent to about one per cent of what farmers currently are able to use in the Burdekin catchment. Modelling shows that Adani could take up to 4 550 megalitres of groundwater in a year. This is roughly equivalent to the annual use of a 450 hectare cane farm in the Lower Burdekin region.

In granting this licence, DNRM carefully considered a broad range of information including an assessment of Adani's application, the Coordinator-General's evaluation report, the project's Land Court case, the EA, the environmental impact statement and its supplementary reports, and the findings of the expert panel established by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and chaired by the Government's Chief Scientist. Reverting to the previous legislative framework would have weakened the water assessment for the Carmichael Coal Mine by removing the need for consideration by the expert panel.

I note the petitioners' concerns about the use of taxpayers' funds and economic benefits. The Government has always supported the sustainable development of the Galilee Basin and Adani's \$21.7 Billion mine, rail and port projects for the jobs and business opportunities they will generate. The Government continues to meet its election commitment that no Government funding will be given to the project and no dredging will take place at Abbot Point until Adani demonstrates financial close.

The Government has made the protection of the Great Barrier Reef a key priority by committing to a number of actions to ensure this precious icon is conserved to international standards for future generations. Further details are available at www.gbr.qld.gov.au/priorities.

The Government acknowledges that the greatest long-term threat to the Reef is climate change with its warmer weather, higher sea temperatures, ocean acidification and increased frequency of extreme weather events. That is why the Government is absolutely committed to Queensland playing its part in the global effort to limit warming to well below two degrees and moving to a low carbon, clean energy future.

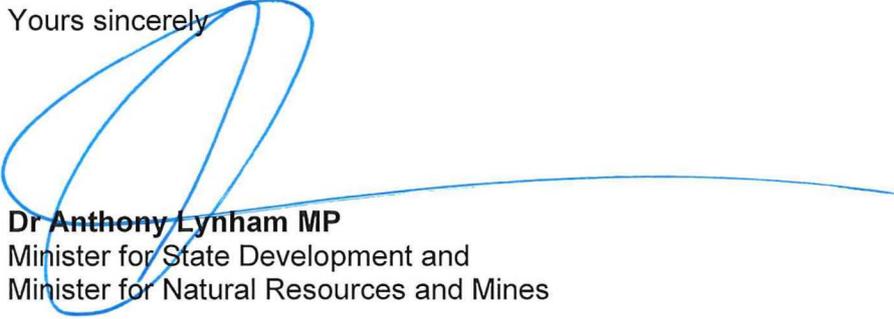
This includes the Government's ground breaking commitment to investigate achieving a 50 per cent renewable energy target in Queensland by 2030 and a cleaner, greener renewable energy future. This initiative has been supported by the recent release by the independent Renewable Energy Expert Panel of the Credible pathways to a 50 per cent renewable energy target for Queensland — draft report.

The Panel found that Queensland's transition to increasing levels of renewable energy by 2030 would deliver significant reductions in the state's greenhouse gas emissions. A planned and measured transition to more renewable energy would also create the jobs of the future, continue to boost investment, and deliver value and system security for both customers and government.

The Government is also tackling climate change by providing \$12 Million (M) to local councils to manage coastal hazards under the QCoast2100 program, investing \$8.4 M to facilitate and expand the carbon farming industry in Queensland and developing a Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy and Queensland Climate Transition Strategy.

I would be pleased if you would arrange the tabling of this response under Standing Order 125(3). Any enquiries regarding this response can be referred to Mr Paul Woodland, Chief of Staff, on telephone 3719 7360.

Yours sincerely



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