

12<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk MP  
Premier  
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Dear Premier,

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) is a non-partisan non-governmental organisation whose main aim is to promote the vital link between the environment and human health. Put simply, humans require a functioning and healthy biosphere to provide us with the basic determinants of health– clean air, clean water, food and shelter.

We are writing to you to ask that you apply a health lens when you make your final judgements regarding ADANI'S Carmichael Coal Project. Approving this mine, and any other projects which would see the Galilee Basin's coal reserves exploited, fundamentally undermines our nation's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as per the Paris Accord. Apart from the contribution to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, mines such as Adani's project will contribute significantly to air pollution which is the leading cause of all pollution related mortality world-wide. This project also poses grave threats to water supplies in a region which is already struggling under the weight of severe and protracted drought.

It is inconceivable to us as an organisation of doctors and medical students, that this project should ever see the light of day given that it will have such significant impacts on health and wellbeing.

If we examine how coal itself harms health, we can see environmental pollutants being produced at every point in the coal lifecycle. Not just coal workers are at risk. It is estimated that people who live within a 50 km radius of a coal fired power station have a 3-4 times higher risk of premature death compared to other populations. We know that coal contributes directly to four of the five leading causes of death– heart disease, stroke, cancer, and chronic lung disease. Fine particulate air pollution (which is what coal mining produces) is a particularly invasive form of air pollution. These tiny particulates can penetrate deeply into our bodies and wreak havoc. These particles can also travel. Particulate pollution which originated in China has been detected in the air Americans breathe every day. Medical research discovers more and more harms from fine particulate pollution all the time, including its contribution to neurodevelopmental issues in young children, neurodegenerative disease in older people, and higher rates of premature birth to name but a few. We are also seeing a very troubling resurgence of coal workers pneumoconiosis amongst Queensland miners. The Australian Academy of Technical Sciences and Engineering estimated that health care costs stemming from coal cost the Australian taxpayer A\$2.6 billion a year. A recent study has estimated that health costs from coal production and burning in the Hunter Valley total about A\$ 600 million per year.

As a nation, we must take our commitments to the Paris Accord very seriously. We have a vital part to play in the fight to reduce global warming to below 2°C. We have just ended our first ever

Climate Week in Queensland. A new thermal coal mine cannot be part of the envisioned low-carbon, clean growth future your government plans for us. Our current commitment to reduce emissions by 26-28% by 2030 will not be met if we allow the Galilee Basin to be mined. In fact, the global carbon budget is all but used up already, and if we are to have even a small chance of keeping warming to below 2°C, 90% of all coal reserves will need to remain in the ground.

As an organisation, we have already made submissions regarding the water usage required by the Carmichael Mine. An independent assessment of Adani's water management plans has found them to be flawed, and as a result the aquifer that supplies much of Queensland's springs and other surface waters are at risk. We are facing very uncertain times ahead as climate change sets in and threatens our state and country with protracted droughts, heatwaves and bushfires. If we are to adapt to these changes, conserving and protecting our water should be paramount.

Finally, it is important to appreciate that tackling Climate Change, which obviously includes transitioning away from polluting fossil fuels, offers us a great opportunity to actually promote and preserve health and make considerable cost savings in the process.

We understand that there is enormous political pressure on your government to expedite approval for this mine. Many people regard the process of a new mine going ahead being simply dependent on passing all the approval processes. Yet we know that the economic viability of the Adani mine is dependent on gaining free water, a favourable deal on delaying royalty payments and access to generous subsidies that Australia provides to mining companies. Therefore, your government does have influence on supporting this proposed mine with handouts or asking it to contribute to the damage and the use of precious resources that belong to all Queenslanders.

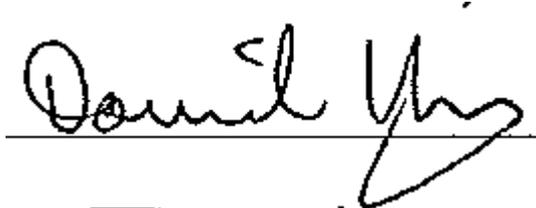
The Adani company has reportedly already started work prior to final approvals being given. Are you going to give in to their bullying (and that of the LNP), or stand up for the long-term health and sustainability of Queensland?

Thank you for taking the time consider our concerns.

Sincerely,



Dr L-J Watt



Dr D King  
For Doctors for the Environment Australia

**DEA Scientific Committee**

Prof Colin Butler  
Prof David de Kretser AC  
Prof Robyn McDermott  
Prof Emeritus Sir Gustav Nossal AC  
Prof Fiona Stanley AC

Prof Stephen Boyden AM  
Prof Peter Doherty AC  
Prof Stephen Leeder AO  
Prof Lidia Morawska  
Prof Hugh Possingham  
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Prof Emeritus Chris Burrell AO  
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