

Sir

To accept that the Abbot Point coal terminal expansion is not being 'fast-tracked' (TB 2 Jan), requires a suspension of belief.

The 2300+ pages of documents about the plans to dump 1.7 m tonnes of dredge spoil in the Caley Valley Wetlands were released on 5 December. The community was given 10 working days to comment, knowing that the proponent (the Queensland government) had told the Federal government that it planned to start construction on 1 January. If that is not 'fast-tracking', I don't know what is.

And then there's the State's claims that the project will expand the size of the wetlands. In fact, as the Heritage Branch of the Environment Department notes, the project will involve the filling in of one of the two northernmost fingers of the Wetlands. The other finger is to be filled in during stage 2 of the project (about which little is known). Magically, according to the proponent, a reduction in size has become an 'expansion'.

And then there's the 'enhancement' of what is left of the Wetlands. This, according to the state government, will be achieved by constructing around it a 6.5 km embankment, topped by coal trains running 24/7.

But probably the doozy of them all: The plan to dump the dredge spoil in the Caley Valley Wetlands, the worst of the seven options considered during the previous incarnation of this Abbot Point expansion, has now become the best option.

The community is being treated like idiots while the State government is bending over backwards to rush through a damaging proposal destined to contribute significantly to climate change for a billionaire Indian mining mogul.

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