



114 Boundary Street  
Railway Estate, Townsville  
Qld, 4810  
PO Box 364, Townsville  
Ph: 61 07 47716226  
[office@nqcc.org.au](mailto:office@nqcc.org.au)  
[www.nqcc.org.au](http://www.nqcc.org.au)

## **NQCC CALLS FOR DECISIVE ACTION ON YABULU**

North Queensland Conservation Council today called on the State and Federal governments to back their promises to stop Clive Palmer dumping contaminated water from his Yabulu nickel refinery into the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) with decisive action.

"This week, the World Heritage Committee meeting in St Petersburg, acknowledged 'major long-term impacts on the property from poor water quality' and said it would consider declaring the Area 'World Heritage in Danger' unless substantial progress is made in relation to its state of conservation by February next year. In the light of this, it is unbelievable that people such as Palmer are even asking to dump massive amounts of contaminated water into the World Heritage Area.

"The State Development Approval for the Yabulu Extension sets down clearly the capacity of the tailing dams. Any decent manager would have kept an eye on the levels of the dams, the output of waste water and the weather – and planned appropriately. This appears not have happened.

"We acknowledge that, when the plan to extend Yabulu was approved, the company was permitted to discharge contaminated tailings into the ocean if they were at capacity, but only under 'extreme climatic conditions'" Coordinator of NQCC Wendy Tubman said.

"In 2003, this condition was changed. One interpretation of the ambiguous 2003 conditions, still current today, is that the company is allowed to discharge into the ocean if the tailing dam is so full that a one in one hundred year wind would result in waves of contaminated water overflowing the dam. Such a condition simply encourages the environmentally irresponsible practice of allowing the damn to fill close to the brim, so that release into the GBRWHA is 'necessary'.

"There are avenues by which the Federal and the State government could autonomously change the conditions and require QNI to increase its capacity to hold tailings or ensure that all water is treated before release into the ocean, and we expect them to address such options.

"At the very least, the State needs to immediately undertake a site inspection and undertake its own analysis of the tailings.

"It is very pleasing to see the Deputy Premier support the environment and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area so strongly. But it is an eye opener for everyone when a so-called 'national treasure' says that children will die if the tailing dams fail, but does nothing to stop adding to the dams."

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**Further information: Wendy Tubman, Coordinator: 0415 176761**